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OF ALL NATIONS



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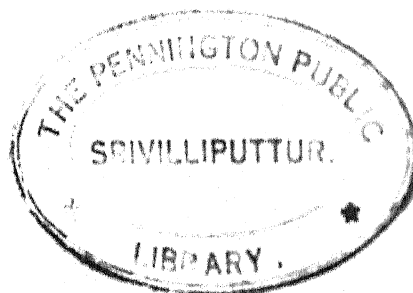
GREAT ESSAYS OF ALL  
NATIONS

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The translation here used is that by Mrs. C. H. W. Johns from *Popular Tales of Ancient Egypt*, by Maspero, published in 1913 by G. P. Putnam's Sons, by whose permission it is here reprinted.

## THE DOOMED PRINCE

THERE was once a king to whom no man child was born. His heart was very sad thereat; he asked for a boy from the gods of his time, and they decreed that one should be born to him. He lay with his wife during the night, and she conceived; when the months of the birth were accomplished lo, a man-child was born. When the Hâthors came to decree him a destiny, they said, "He shall die by the crocodile, or by the serpent, or indeed by the dog." When the people who were with the child heard this, they went to tell His Majesty, I.h.s., and His Majesty, I.h.s., was sad at heart thereat. His Majesty, I.h.s., had a stone house built for him on the mountain, furnished with men and all good things of the dwelling of the king, I.h.s., for the child did not go out of it, and when the child was grown, he went up on to the terrace of his house, and he perceived a greyhound who ran behind a man walking on the road. He said to his page who was with him: "What is it that runs behind the man passing along the road?" The page said to him, "It is a greyhound." The child said to him, "Let one be brought to me exactly like it." The page went to repeat this to His Majesty, I.h.s., and His Majesty, I.h.s., said, "Let a young running dog be taken to him, for fear his heart should be saddened." And lo, the greyhound was taken to him.

And after the days had passed in this manner, when the child had acquired age in all his limbs, he sent a message to his father, saying, "Come! why be like the sluggards? Although I am doomed to three grievous destinies, yet I will act according to my will. God will not do less than he has at heart." One listened to that which he spake, one gave him all kinds of weapons, and also his greyhound to follow him, and transported him to the eastern coast. One said to him, "Go where thou desirest." His greyhound was with him; he went therefore as he fancied across the country, living on the best of all the game of the country. Having arrived to fly to the prince of Naharinnx, behold there was no son born to the prince of Naharinnx, only a daughter. Now, he had built a house with seventy windows which were seventy cubits above the ground. He caused all the sons of the princes of the country of Kharu to be brought, and he said to them, "To him who shall reach the window of my daughter, she shall be given him for wife."

Now, many days after these things were accomplished, while the

chief gave him his daughter to wife; and he gave him a house, vassals, fields, also cattle and all manner of good things.

Now, when the days had passed thus, the young man said to his wife, "I am doomed to three destinies, the crocodile, the serpent, the dog." She said to him, "Let the dog be killed that runs before thee." He said to her, "If it please thee, I will not kill my dog that I brought up when it was little." She feared for her husband greatly, greatly, and she did not let him go out alone. Now it happened that one deputed to travel; the prince was escorted to the land of Egypt, to wander about the country. Now behold, the crocodile of the river came out of the river, and he came into the midst of the town where the prince was; they shut him up in a dwelling where there was a giant. The giant did not let the crocodile go out, but when the crocodile slept the giant went out for a stroll; then when the sun arose, the giant returned every day, for an interval of two months of days. And after that the days had passed in this manner, the prince remained to divert himself in his house. When the night came, the prince lay down on his bed, and sleep took possession of his limbs. His wife filled a vase with milk and placed it by her side. When a serpent came out of its hole to bite the prince, behold, his wife watched over her husband with close attention. Then the maid-servants gave milk to the serpent; it drank of it, it became drunk, it lay on its back, and the wife cut it in pieces with blows of her hatchet. Her husband was awakened, who was seized with astonishment, and she said to him, "Behold, thy god has given one of thy fates into thy hand; he will give thee the others." He presented offerings to the god, he adored him, and exalted his power all the days of his life. And after the days had passed in this manner, the prince came out to walk near his domain, and as he never came out alone, behold, his dog was behind him. His dog started in pursuit of the game, and he ran after the dog. When he reached the river, he went down the bank of the river behind his dog, and the crocodile came out and dragged him to the place where the giant was. He came out and saved the prince; then the crocodile said to the prince, "Lo, I am thy destiny that pursues thee; whatever thou mayest do, thou wilt be brought back on to my path to me, thou and the giant. Now behold, I am about to let thee go; if thou wilt know that my enchantments have triumphed, and that the giant is slain; and when thou seest that the giant is slain, thou seest thy death." And when the earth lightened, and the second day was, then came.

"Thou wilt swear to me to slay the giant; if thou dost refuse this, thou shalt see death." And when the earth lightened, and a second day

[The prophecy of the crocodile is so much mutilated that I cannot guarantee its exact meaning; we can only guess that the monster set some kind of fatal dilemma before his adversary; or that the prince fulfilled a certain condition, and succeeded in overcoming the crocodile, or that he did not fulfil it, and that he saw his death.]

and for me, I will return to my brothers." Then the prince called his wife, he took his dog with him, and they all hid themselves in a cave of the mountain. They had been there two days and two nights when the sons of the princes of Kharu arrived with many soldiers, and they passed before the mouth of the cave without any of them perceiving the prince; but as the last of them came near, the dog went out against him and began to bark. The sons of the princes of Kharu recognized him, and they came back and went into the cave. The wife threw herself before her husband to protect him, but, behold, a lance struck her, and she fell dead before him. And the young man slew one of the princes with his sword, and the dog killed another with his teeth, but the rest struck them with their lances, and they fell to the ground unconscious. Then the princes dragged the bodies out of the cave, and left them stretched on the ground to be devoured by wild beasts and birds of prey, and they departed to rejoin their companions and divide with them the lands of the chief of Naharinna.

And, behold, when the last of the princes had departed, the young man opened his eyes, and he saw his wife stretched on the ground by his side, as dead, and the dead body of his dog. Then he trembled, and he said: "In truth, the gods fulfil immutably that which they have decreed beforehand. The Hâthors have decided, from my infancy, that I should perish by the dog, and behold, their sentence has been executed, for it is the dog which has betrayed me to mine enemies. I am ready to die, because, without these two beings, who lie beside me, life is intolerable to me." And he raised his hands to the sky, and cried: "I have not sinned against you O ye gods! Therefore grant me a happy burial in this world, and to be true of voice before the judges of Amentit." He sank down as dead, but the gods had heard his voice, the Ennead of the gods came to him, and Râ-Harmakhis said to his companions: "The doom is fulfilled; now let us give a new life to these two wedded people, for it is good to reward worthily the devotion which they have shown one to the other." And the mother of the gods approved with her head the words of Râ-Harmakhis, and she said: "Such devotion deserves very great reward." The other gods said the same; then the seven Hâthors came forward, and they said: "The doom is fulfilled; now they shall return to life." And they returned to life immediately.



## ARES AND APHRODITE

(From *The Odyssey* Book VIII)

THE minstrel twanged the chords of his lyre in prelude to his lay and sang of the love of Ares and Aphrodite, of the fair crown, how first they secretly lay together in the house of Hephæstus; and Ares gave her many gifts, and dishonoured the bed of the lord Hephæstus. But soon there came to him one with tidings, even Helius, who had seen them as they made love together. And when Hephæstus heard the bitter news, he went his way to his smithy, feeling evil in his heart, and set on the anvil block the great anvil and forged fetters which none might break or loosen, that the lovers might remain fast where they were. But when he had wrought the snare in his wrath against Ares, he went to the chamber where his bed was set, and round about the bed-posts he spread the bonds, and many too were hung aloft, from the roof-beams, cunning as spiders' webs, so that no one even of the blessed gods could see them, so craftily were they forged. And when he had strewed all his snare about the bed, he made as though he would go to Lemnos, that well-built castle, which in his eyes was far the dearest of all lands. But no blind watch did Ares of the golden rein keep, when he saw Hephæstus, famous for his craftsmanship, departing. He went his way to the house of the renowned Hephæstus, eager for the love of Cytherea of the fair crown. Now she had but lately come from her father, the mighty son of Cronos, and had sat her down. And Ares came into the house and clasped her hand and spake to her:

"Come, beloved, let us to bed and take our joy of love. For Hephæstus is no longer here, but has now departed, methinks, to Lemnos, to visit the Sintians of savage speech."

So he spake, and a happy thing it seemed to her to lie with him. So they went to the couch, and lay them down to sleep, and about them clung the subtle bonds of the crafty Hephæstus, nor could they in any manner move their limbs or raise them. Then at last they knew there was no escape. Now approaching them came the famous god of the mighty arms, having turned back ere he reached the land of Lemnos; for Helius had kept watch for him and reported. So he went to his house with a troubled heart, and stood at the gateway, and a furious rage seized him. And terribly he shouted out to all the gods:

"Father Zeus, and ye other blessed gods that endure forever, come hither that ye may see a mirthful matter and a monstrous, for Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, contemns me because of my lameness and enamoured of treacherous Ares since he is fair and strong of limb, whereas I was born deformed. How be it there is none to reproach other than my parents—would they had never begotten me! But ye shall see where

Paphos, where is her domain and fragrant altar. There the Graces bathed her and anointed her with immortal oil, such as gleams upon the deathless gods. And they clad her in lovely raiment, a wonder to behold.

\* \* \*

## HERODOTUS

(484-424 B.C.)

HERODOTUS, the Father of History, was a native of Halicarnassus in Asia Minor. He left his native city and turned traveller, in which capacity he collected a mass of material at first hand. He was the first to give artistic form to what had so far been a dry recital of events, and coloured all he wrote with the imagination of an epic poet. *Candaules' Folly* may partake more of gossip than history, but it is a rare story which modern authors have frequently retold.

The present version is a slightly modified one of the translation by B. R., first published in 1584. There is no title in the original.

### CANDAULES' FOLLY

(From the *History*, Book I)

CANDAULES was passing well affectioned to his wife, in so much that for the singular love he bare her, he thought her to excel all women in the comely features of the body. And hereof, being himself fully persuaded, he fortun'd to fall in talk with Gyges, son of Dascylus, one of the chief and principal men of his guard (whom also he especially favoured and not seldom employed him in matters of great weight) advancing unto him the seemly shape of his wife above mentioned. In a short space after (for the evil hap haunted him) meeting with the aforesaid Gyges, he began thus:

"My faithful servant Gyges, whereas thou seemest not to credit the large vaunts and often brags which I make of my lady's beauty and comeliness (the ears of men being much more incredulous than their eyes) behold I will so bring to pass, that thou shalt see her naked." Whereat the poor gentleman great abashed and in no wise willing to assent thereto, made answer as follows:

"My lord," quoth he, "what manner of speech is this which unadvisedly you use in persuading me to behold my lady's secrets. For a woman, you know, the more in sight, the less in shame. Who together with her garments layeth aside her modesty. Honest precepts have been devised by our elders which we ought to remember, whereof this is one

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either to slay the King Candaules and enjoy me with the King's wife, Lydia: or thy self presently to lease thy life. Last is to be slain. In that thou oughtest not, thou hast heeded all things that I have said, thou shouldst not. There is no remedy that one of our three shall be saved, either the master or the man, either he which did this deed, or he which self that sawest me naked, and didst those things that were not to be done."

Gyges herewith amazed began first to beseech her, bidding her not to bind him to so hard a condition. Nevertheless, when she could not persuade her, and seeing it necessary either to murder him, or to be murdered by other; he deemed it the better choice to be murdered, and turning his speech to the Queen in this wise: "My Sovereign Lady, I am forced, since of necessity you compel me to become guilty of some crime, my King, let me hear by what means we shall be saved, that I may know the truth," said she, "our treason shall proceed from the same place, from whence he betrayed my shame. The assault shall be made when he is asleep." The wretched Gentleman driven to such a desperate choice, either he must slay or be slain, made no delay, but forthwith went into her bed chamber, whom with a naked dagger, he laid straightway placed behind the same door, from whence Gyges afterwards having bereaved Candaules of his life and obtained both his wife and the kingdom.

\* \* \*

## HELIODORUS

(3rd Century, A.D.)

HELIODORUS was born in Syria and, after embracing Christianity, became Bishop of Tiberias in Palestine. After his death and burial, he is almost the Homer of prose fiction. His *Story of a Romance*, the most finished and earliest full-length novel in the world, is spersed with tales, among which *Carmen's Story* stands out as a model for plot and structure.

The present version is slightly modified from the translation by Thomas Underdowne, 1887. The story is without a parallel in the original.

## CNEMON'S STORY

(From *The Ethiopica*, Book I)

**M**Y father's name was Aristippus, he was born in Athens, one of the upper Senate, as rich as any Commoner in the City. He, after the decease of my mother, applied his mind to music, agone, thinking it an unreasonable thing for me, his only son's sake, still to be of an uncertain and doubtful mind. He doth therefore bring home a

all means possible to entrap me. And first of all, she kept her bed, and when my father came home, and asked her how she fared, made him answer, that she was sick, but when he was very importunate, and desirous to know what she ailed: 'The goodly young man (said she) that loved me so well, son to us both, whom I, the Gods know, loved a great deal better than you, when he perceived by certain tokens that I was great with child by you, which thing I concealed from you (until I knew the certainty myself) and waiting for your absence, when I counselled him as my manner was, and persuaded him to leave haunting of harlots; and too much drinking (which things I knew well enough, but would never tell you of them, least thereby I should incur the cruel suspicion of a stepmother with you) while I say I talked with him of these things alone, no more but he and I, least he should be ashamed, I will not tell the worst, for I am abashed so to do, nor in what manner he reviled both you and me, lastly spurned me on the belly, and hath caused me to be in such case as you see. As soon as he heard this, he said nothing, nor asked me no questions, neither gave me leave to speak for myself, but persuading himself, that she, who loved me so well, would by no means belie me, as soon as he found me in a certain corner of the house, boxed me with his fists, and calling his servants together, scourged me with rods, and would not suffer me to know (which all men do) why I was cruelly beaten. When his anger was well cooled, and he came to himself again, I said to him, father, yet now at length I pray you tell me why I have had thus many stripes, wherewith he was much more incensed, she clearly dissembler, (said he) he would know his owne misdeed of me, he went in again to Demegeta, but she had not content with this, devised such another sleight against me. She had a maid called Thisbe which could play well on the virginals, and was otherwise fair, and a very proper wench. Her, she made a stale for me and commanded her to love me, and by and by she did so in deed, and where she refused me, oftentimes attempting her before, now she allured me with countenance, becks, and many other signs. Now was I somewhat proud, for that of a sudden I was become beautiful, and in deed on a night, when she came to my bed, thought no scorn to make her room. She liked her entertainment so well, that she came again and continually haunted my bed. At length when I gave her counsel to use circumspection in this matter, and take heed that her mistress found her not with me, Cnemon (said she) you seem to be too simple, if you count it a dangerous matter, for me being a bond maybe bought with money, to be taken abed with you, what punishment think you her worthy that professing herself a free woman, and lawfully married hath a husband, and yet playeth the naughtipack: Peace (quoth I) I cannot believe that. Yes (said she) if you will, I will deliver the adulterer to you, even in the deed doing. If you will so do (quoth I) you shall do me a pleasure. With all my heart (said she) not only for

but that Fortune hindered him, and by a sudden fear, he cast it falling out of his hand. I flee to you and tell you therefore. And with respect to the law I might with mine own hand slay him, yet I would not, because I remit I my whole cause to your discretion, thinking that I should do better if I punish my son, rather by public law, than private revenge, and therewithal he wept, so did Demetrius also, and being both of them very sorrowful for my mishap, calling me an unhappy creature, as if she might, being in danger to die before my natural time, yet Demetrius had stirred against my parents. Not only did she so much testify her lament as she testified the same with her tears, and as though her conversation had been true, with weeping she confirmed the same. And when I craved license to speak for myself, the senate came to me, and I expounded this straight question, whether I came to my father, armed with a sword in my hand, I did (quoth I) but I will tell you how. There with every man cried out, and said, that I ought not to stand, but to be hanged, and some to be cast headlong into the dungeon. And when they that they were consulting of my punishment, I cried out, O my poor stepmother, alas, for my stepmother's sake and I thus troubled my stepmother killeth me without judgment, and many marked my words very well, and began to suspect as it was indeed, but for all that at that time could I not be heard such was the tumult, and noise of the people. And when the voices were reckoned, those, who condemned me to die, were a thousand seven hundred, whereof, the one half would have me stoned, the other cast into the dungeon, the other, of whom was about a thousand crediting somewhat the suspicion they had conceived of my stepmother, gave sentence that I should be banished for ever, yet those prevailed, for although they were fewer than the whole number of the rest, yet I came much as the other voices differed, severally compared with every one alone, a thousand was the greatest number, and thus was I banished from my father's house and native country.

## THE TALKATIVE TORTOISE

(From the *Jātaka*)

ONCE upon a time when Brahma-datta was reigning in Benares the future Buddha was born in a minister's family; and when he grew up, he became the king's adviser in things temporal and spiritual.

Now this king was very talkative: while he was speaking, others had no opportunity for a word. And the future Buddha, wanting to cure this talkativeness of his, was constantly seeking for some means of doing so.

At that time there was living, in a pond in the Himalaya mountains, a tortoise. Two young hangsas (i.e. wild ducks) who came to feed there, made friends with him. And one day, when they had become very intimate with him, they said to the tortoise:

"Friend tortoise! the place where we live at the Golden Cave on Mount Beautiful in the Himalaya country is a delightful spot. Will you come there with us?"

"But how can I get there?"

"We can take you, if you can only hold your tongue, and will say nothing to anybody."

"O! that I can do. Take me with you."

"That's right," said they. And making the tortoise bite hold of a stick, they themselves took the two ends in their teeth, and flew up into the air.

Seeing him thus carried by the hangsas, some villagers called out, "Two wild ducks are carrying a tortoise along on a stick!" Whereupon the tortoise wanted to say, "If my friends choose to carry me, what is that to you, you wretched slaves!" So just as the swift flight of the wild ducks had brought him over the king's palace in the city of Benares, he let go of the stick he was biting, and falling in the open courtyard, split in two! And there arose a universal cry: "A tortoise has fallen in the open courtyard, and has split in two!"

The king, taking the future Buddha, went to the place surrounded by his courtiers, and looking at the tortoise, he asked the Bodhisat: "Teacher! how comes he to be fallen here?"

The future Buddha thought to himself: "Long expecting, wishing to admonish the king, have I sought for some means of doing so. This tortoise must have made friends with the wild ducks; and they must have made him bite hold of the stick, and have flown up into the air to take him to the hills. But he, being unable to hold his tongue when he hears anyone else talk, must have wanted to say something, and let go the stick; and so must have fallen down from the sky and thus lost his life." And

## THE BUTTER-BLINDED BRAHMAN

(From *The Panchatantra*)

THERE was once a Brahman named Theodore. His wife, being unchaste and a pursuer of other men, was forever making cake with sugar and butter for a lover, and so cheating her husband. Now one day her husband saw her and said: "My dear wife, what are you cooking? And where are you forever carrying cakes? Tell the truth."

But her impudence was equal to the occasion, and she lied to her husband: "There is a shrine of the blessed goddess not far from here. There I have undertaken a fasting ceremony, and I take an offering including the most delicious dishes." Then she took the cakes before his very eyes and started for the shrine of the goddess, imagining that after her statement, her husband would believe it was for the goddess that his wife was daily providing delicious dishes. Having reached the shrine, she went down to the river to perform the ceremonial bath.

Meanwhile her husband arrived by another road and hid behind the statue of the goddess. And his wife entered the shrine after her bath, performed the various rites—laving, anointing, giving incense, making an offering, and so on—bowed before the goddess, and prayed: "O blessed one, how may my husband be made blind?"

Then the Brahman behind the goddess' back spoke, disguising his natural tone: "If you never stop giving him such food as butter and butter-cakes, then he will presently go blind."

Now that loose female, deceived by the plausible revelation, gave the Brahman just that kind of food every day. One day the Brahman said: "My dear, I don't see very well." And she thought: "Thank the goddess."

Then the favored lover thought: "The Brahman has gone blind. What can he do to me?" Whereupon he came daily to the house without hesitation.

But at last the Brahman caught him as he entered, seized him by the hair, and clubbed and kicked him to such effect that he died. He also cut off his wicked wife's nose, and dismissed her.



daughter named Devasmitá for his son Guhasena. But Dharmagupta, who was tenderly attached to his daughter, did not approve of that connection, reflecting that the city of Támraliptá was very far off. But when Devasmitá beheld that Guhasena, her mind was immediately attracted by his virtues, and she was set on abandoning her relations, and so she made an assignation with him by means of a confidante, and went away from that country at night with her beloved and his father. When they reached Támraliptá they were married, and the minds of the young couple were firmly knit together by the bond of mutual love. Then Guhasena's father died, and he himself was urged by his relations to go to the country of Katáha for the purpose of trafficking; but his wife Devasmitá was too jealous to approve of that expedition, fearing exceedingly that he would be attracted by some other lady. Then, as his wife did not approve of it, and his relations kept inciting him to it, Guhasena, whose mind was firmly set on doing his duty, was bewildered. Then he went and performed a vow in the temple of the god, observing a rigid fast, trusting that the god would show him some way out of his difficulty. And his wife Devasmitá also performed a vow with him; then Siva was pleased to appear to that couple in a dream; and giving them two red lotuses the god said to them, "Take each of you one of these lotuses in your hand. And if either of you shall be unfaithful during your separation, the lotus in the hand of the other shall fade, but not otherwise." After hearing this, the two woke up, and each beheld in the hand of the other a red lotus, and it seemed as if they had got one another's hearts. Then Guhasena set out, lotus in hand, but Devasmitá remained in the house with her eyes fixed upon her flower. Guhasena for his part quickly reached the country of Katáha, and began to buy and sell jewels there. And four young merchants in that country, seeing that that unfading lotus was ever in his hand, were greatly astonished. Accordingly they got him to their house by an artifice, and made him drink a great deal of wine, and then asked him the history of the lotus, and he being intoxicated told them the whole story. Then those four young merchants, knowing that Guhasena would take a long time to complete his sales and purchases of jewels and other wares, planned together, like rascals as they were, the seduction of his wife out of curiosity, and eager to accomplish it set out quickly for Támraliptá without their departure being noticed. There they cast about for some instrument, and at last had recourse to a female ascetic of the name of Yogakarandiká, who lived in a sanctuary of Buddha; and they said to her in an affectionate manner, "Reverend madam, if our object is accomplished by your help, we will give you much wealth." She answered them: "No doubt, you young men desire some woman in this city, so tell me all about it, I will procure you the object of your desire. What woman do you desire? I will quickly procure her for you." When they heard that they said, "Procure us an interview with

for me"; and so she said to her, "Reverend lady, for this long time I have been ignorant of this duty, so procure me an interview with some charming man." Then the ascetic said, "There are residing here some young merchants that have come from another country, so I will bring them to you." When she had said this, the ascetic returned home delighted, and Devasmitá of her own accord said to her maids: "No doubt those scoundrelly young merchants, whoever they may be, have seen that unfading lotus in the hand of my husband, and have on some occasion or other, when he was drinking wine, asked him out of curiosity to tell the whole story of it, and have now come here from that island to deceive me, and this wicked ascetic is employed by them. So bring quickly some wine mixed with *Datura*, and when you have brought it, have a dog's foot of iron made as quickly as possible." When Devasmitá had given these orders, the maids executed them faithfully, and one of the maids, by her orders, dressed herself up to resemble her mistress. The ascetic for her part chose out of the party of four merchants (each of whom in his eagerness said—"Let me go first"—) one individual, and brought him with her. And concealing him in the dress of her pupil, she introduced him in the evening into the house of Devasmitá, and coming out, disappeared. Then that maid, who was disguised as Devasmitá, courteously persuaded the young merchant to drink some of that wine drugged with *Datura*. That liquor, like his own immodesty, robbed him of his senses, and then the maids took away his clothes and other equipments and left him stark naked; then they branded him on the forehead with the mark of a dog's foot, and during the night took him and pushed him into a ditch full of filth. Then he recovered consciousness in the last watch of the night, and found himself plunged in a ditch, as it were the hell *Avichi* assigned to him by his sins. Then he got up and washed himself and went to the house of the female ascetic, in a state of misery, feeling with his fingers the mark on his forehead. And when he got there, he told his friends that he had been robbed on the way, in order that he might not be the only person made ridiculous. And the next morning he sat with a cloth wrapped round his branded forehead, giving as an excuse that he had a headache from keeping awake so long, and drinking too much. In the same way the next young merchant was maltreated, when he got to the house of Devasmitá, and when he returned home stripped, he said, "I put on my ornaments there, and as I was coming out I was plundered by robbers." In the morning he also, on the plea of a headache, put a wrapper on to cover his branded forehead.

In the same way all the four young merchants suffered in turn branding and other humiliating treatment, though they concealed the fact. And they went away from the place, without revealing to the female Buddhist ascetic the ill-treatment they had experienced, hoping that she would suffer in a similar way. On the next day the ascetic went with her



## BIBLICAL LITERATURE

### *Introduction*

WHILE it is strictly outside the province of this volume to consider the inspirational value of the Bible, we cannot ignore the fact that for sheer beauty, poetry and wisdom—not to mention historicity—it is unsurpassed by any other single volume. Because of its universal appeal, primarily created by churches and their missionaries, the Bible has permeated the very structure of our language and has even influenced our thoughts. The masters of literary style have sedulously studied the Bible for it was and still is the intellectual and poetic treasurehouse.

The *Old Testament*, the basis of Hebrew literature and the Jewish religion, consists of thirty-nine books. While some of these are at times a trifle dull, such as the lengthy genealogies, we are compensated by such tales as those about the tragic Samson, the heroic Deborah; or the Book of Ruth, with its motive of homesickness exercising a universal appeal.

The *New Testament* concerns itself with the biography of Jesus. Among the gospels are to be found the parables which, while they do not possess the form of the short story, are pregnant with rare beauty. The *Talmud* is a collection of laws held sacred by orthodox Jews and serves as a commentary on the *Old Testament*. It contains a great many tales of a moral nature, which were no doubt used to illustrate a theological contention.



## THE BOOK OF ESTHER

(From the *Old Testament*)

THE *Book of Esther* may be justifiably considered as an early example of historical romance. At any rate we have here all the elements for such a romance, namely, plot and counter-plot with plenty of bloodshed, and an exceedingly beautiful and witty woman whose appeal to her royal husband prevents a massacre of her people. The narrative is remarkable for its swift and succinct literary style.

Only the first eight chapters are used here, and the version is that of the King James translation except that the verses have been merged into paragraphs.

The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not. Likewise shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus shall there arise much contempt and wrath. If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be no altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she. And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their husband honour, both to great and small."

And the saying pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan: for he sent letters into all the king's provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and that it should be published according to the language of every people.

After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her. Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him:-- "Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king: and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hegai the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their things for purification be given them: and let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti." And the thing pleased the king; and he did so.

Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite; who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away. And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.

So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree were heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women. And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her things for purification, with her portions, and the seven maidens which were meet to be given her, out of the king's house: and he preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women. Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charge

unto Mordecai:—"Why transgressest thou the king's commandment?" Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew. And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath. And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.

In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar. And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus:—"There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasures." And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy. And the king said unto Haman:—"The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee."

Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring. And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey. The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day. The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed.

When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry; and came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and

Esther answered:—"If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him." Then the king said:—"Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said." So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine:—"What is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed." Then answered Esther, and said:—"My petition and my request is: if I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to-morrow as the king hath said."

Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai. Nevertheless Haman refrained himself: and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife. And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children; and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. Haman said moreover:—"Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king. Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him:—"Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to-morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet." And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.

On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king. And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. And the king said:—"What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this?" Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him:—"There is nothing done for him." And the king said:—"Who is in the court?" Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him. And the king's servants said unto him:—"Behold, Haman standeth in the court." And the king said:—"Let him come in." So Haman came in. And the king said unto him:—"What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" Now Haman thought in his heart:—"To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?"

also before me in the house?" As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king:—"Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman." Then the king said:—"Hang him thereon." So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

On that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman the Jews' enemy unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what he was unto her. And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman. And Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews. Then the king held out the golden sceptre toward Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the king, and said:—"If it please the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews which are in all the king's provinces: for how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?"

Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew:—"Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews. Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring: for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse."

Then were the king's scribes called at that time in the third month, that is, the month Sivan, on the three and twentieth day thereof; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded unto the Jews, and to the lieutenants, and the deputies and rulers of the provinces which are from India unto Ethiopia, an hundred twenty and seven provinces, unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language, and to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language. And he wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name, and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries: wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey, upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the

king, be not deceived: for this is but clay within, and brass without, and did never eat or drink any thing." So the king was wroth, and called for his priests, and said unto them:—"If ye tell me not who this is that devoureth these expences, ye shall die. But if ye can certify me that Bel devoureth them, then Daniel shall die: for he hath spoken blasphemy against Bel." And Daniel said unto the king:—"Let it be according to thy word."

Now the priests of Bel were threescore and ten, beside their wives and children. And the king went with Daniel into the temple of Bel. So Bel's priests said:—"Lo, we go out: but thou, O king, set on the meat, and make ready the wine, and shut the door fast, and seal it with thine own signet; and to-morrow when thou comest in, if thou findest not that Bel hath eaten up all, we will suffer death: or else Daniel, that speaketh falsely against us." And they little regarded it: for under the table they had made a privy entrance, whereby they entered in continually, and consumed those things. So when they were gone forth, the king set meats before Bel. Now Daniel had commanded his servant to bring ashes, and those they strewed throughout all the temple in the presence of the king alone: then went they out, and shut the door, and sealed it with the king's signet, and so departed.

Now in the night came the priests with their wives and children, as they were wont to do, and did eat and drink up all. In the morning betime the king arose, and Daniel with him. And the king said:—"Daniel, are the seals whole?" And he said:—"Yea, O king, they be whole." And as soon as he opened the door, the king looked upon the table, and cried with a loud voice:—"Great art thou, O Bel, and with thee is no deceit at all." Then laughed Daniel, and held the king that he should not go in, and said:—"Behold now the pavement, and mark well whose footsteps are these." And the king said:—"I see the foot steps of men, women, and children." And then the king was angry and took the priests with their wives and children, who shewed him the privy doors, where they came in, and consumed such things as were upon the table. Therefore the king slew them, and delivered Bel into Daniel's power, who destroyed him and his temple.

And in that same place there was a great dragon, which they of Babylon worshipped. And the king said unto Daniel:—"Wilt thou also say that this is of brass? lo, he liveth, he eateth and drinketh; thou canst not say that he is no living god: therefore worship him." Then said Daniel unto the king:—"I will worship the Lord my God: for He is the living God. But give me leave, O king, and I shall slay this dragon without sword or staff." The king said:—"I give thee leave." The Daniel took pitch, and fat, and hair, and did seethe them together, and made lumps thereof: this he put in the dragon's mouth, and so the dragon burst in sunder: and Daniel said:—"Lo, these are the gods ye worship."





## ANCIENT ROME

### Introduction

THE Greek influence was largely the determining factor for Roman literature. Some of the first teachers the Romans had were Greeks that had been taken prisoners after the capture of southern Italy. During the first period of Roman literature we first see the growth of poetry, drama and history; and since we are essentially concerned with the short story, we need not go into the works of Ennius, Plautus, Terrence, Livy and the many others who contributed to the development of Latin literature.

In the Augustan period we find some of the greatest poets, Virgil, Horace and Ovid. The latter was not only a brilliant poet, but he also had the power of continuous narrative, which is best seen in his *Metamorphoses*. In this collection of myths we find some delightful stories.

The *Satyricon* of Petronius is the first sustained prose work produced in Latin. It has a genuine literary quality, is most sincere in its representation and is most penetrating in its satire. The period that follows is somewhat more sober and drier. Pliny the Elder writes his *Natural History*, Statius his *Epics*, and Martial his *Epigrams*. It is in these *Epigrams* that the age of Domitian is forever preserved for us. Here we meet the familiar personages as they go about their daily life. Later, under Trajan, were produced the famous *Histories* of Tacitus and the *Satires* of Juvenal. Both of these authors have summed up in their respective works the experiences of the Roman world from the accession of Tiberius to the death of Domitian. Though Pliny the Younger did not contradict the indignation and the scorn found in Tacitus and Juvenal, he nevertheless toned down their tragic implication in his *Letters*.

After the death of Juvenal, it may be said that Latin literature, with the exception of Suetonius and Apuleius, began rapidly to decline.



### OVID

(43 B.C.-18 A.D.?)

OVID, born in the eastern part of central Italy, began his career as a brilliant and successful poet, and was forced, by imperial command, to spend the later part of his life in exile. *Metamorphoses* is among his best known titles. In this work Ovid successfully completed the

into the woods, she chances upon the veil and tears the lifeless thing with her bloody jaws.

Pyramus, coming a little later, notes by the glimmering moon the tracks of the beast printed on the ground and grows pale. But when he spied the blood-stained veil, he cried, "One night shall bring two lovers to death. But she was deserving of long life. I am guilty, and have caused thy death by asking thee here to this dangerous place while I did not come sooner. O, ye lions, repair from your neighbouring dens and rend my guilty body. But only cowards pray idly thus for death." He gathers up the veil and carries it to the appointed tree, kissing it and washing it with his tears, and exclaims, "Drink now of my blood also." Then he plunged his shining sword into his breast, and fell on the ground, drawing the blade from his wound. As he did so, the hot blood spouted upward, just as a conduit-pipe bursting, shoots a gushing stream of water skyward. The fruit of the tree, stained with blood, showed a dark colour, while the roots, soaked with the flowing gore, tinged the berries with the same purple hue.

Meantime Thisbe, fearing that her lover might miss her, comes, trembling, from her hiding-place and seeks for him with eager eyes and ardent soul, anxious to tell him what destruction she had escaped. And while she perceives the tree and recognises its form, the colour of the fruit leaves her in doubt. As she hesitates, she sees a body on the ground gasping and quivering in death, at sight of which she starts back horrified and shivers like the smooth surface of the sea when ruffled by a rising breeze. But when she finally recognises her lover, she shrieks, tears her hair and beats her breast in grief; then embracing his body she bathes his wound with her tears. And as she pressed her lips to his cold face, she wailed, "My Pyramus, what cruel fate has caused this deed? Pyramus, answer me! 'Tis thy dearest Thisbe calling thee. Speak but one word, I implore." At Thisbe's name, Pyramus opened his dying eyes, looked upon her face, and closed them again.

Now when she found her veil and the sheathless sword, she said, "Thy own hand and thy love took thy life. I too can show a bold hand, and love shall give me strength and guide the fatal blow. I will follow thee in death. The world may say that I am the cause of thy death but I shall be the comrade of thy fate. Though death divide us, it shall not have the power to part me from thee. O wretched parents, hear the prayer I offer for us both, that we, whom love at first and ultimately fate has joined, should be laid together at rest. And thou, O tree, who now shade one lifeless corpse, and ere long will shade another, keep thou the marks of our death, and bear thy purple fruit in token of our blood."

She spoke, and plunged the sword, still warm with her lover's blood, below her breast. The prayer of dying Thisbe moved the gods and

While we were relishing these delicacies, Trimalchio was borne into the hall to the sound of music, propped on tiny cushions. A laugh escaped the surprised guests. His shaven head popped out of a scarlet cloak, and over his well wrapped neck he had put a napkin with a broad stripe and fringes dangling all round. On the little finger of his left hand he wore a huge gilt ring, and on the last joint of the next finger was a smaller ring which appeared to me to be solid gold, but was really set with star-shaped bits of steel. And to show that this display of wealth was but part of his possession, he bared his right arm, encircled by a golden bracelet and an ivory bangle clasped with a plate of gleaming metal.

Then, picking his teeth with a silver quill, he said, "It is inconvenient for me to appear at dinner so soon, my friends, but I did not like to stay away any longer and keep you from your enjoyment. But you will allow me to finish my game?"

A boy followed him carrying a table of terebinth wood and crystal pieces, and I noticed a curious thing. Instead of black and white counters he used gold and silver coins. Trimalchio kept swearing as he played and we were still occupied with the *hors d'œuvres*, when a tray was brought in with a basket on it, in which there was a wooden hen with outspread wings as if in the act of laying an egg. While the music grew loud, two slaves came up to the tray and began to search in the straw. They pulled out peahen's eggs and distributed them to the guests. Trimalchio observed this procedure and said, "I have ordered, my friends, to put peahen's eggs under this hen. And upon my word I hope they are not yet hatched. But let us try them and see whether they are still fresh." We took our spoons, weighing at least half-a-pound, and beat the eggs, which were made of a fine paste. I was on the point of throwing away my share, believing that a chick had already formed. But hearing an experienced diner exclaim, "What daintiness have we here?" I broke the shell and found a fat becafico smothered in yolk spiced with pepper.

Trimalchio had now finished his game, and began to partake of all the same dishes. In a loud voice he invited any of us who might so desire, to drink a second glass of mead. Suddenly the music crashed forth, and the appetizers were swept away by a host of chanting waiters. A dish happened to fall in the confusion and a boy gathered it up from the floor. Trimalchio saw him, and had his ear boxed, and directed him to throw down the dish again. A litter-man appeared and swept out the silver with the other wasted contents. Then entered two long-haired Ethiopians with small wineskins, just like those used for scattering sand in an amphitheatre, and poured wine on our hands, for no one thought of offering us common water.

We complimented our host on his excellent taste. "Mars loves fair play," said he, "and therefore I ordered that every one should have a

flourishing his instruments in time with the music, carved the dainty pieces, like a gladiator in a chariot fighting to the accompaniment of a barrel-organ. As Trimalchio kept repeating softly, "Oh, Carver, Carver," I pondered on the meaning of this word, believing it to be a jest and I made bold to ask the man who sat on my left what it meant (He had seen such performances before.) "Do you see the fellow carving the meat? Well, his name is Carver. So whenever Trimalchio says the words, he calls him by name, and gives him his orders."

When I had eaten my fill, I turned to my neighbour to get as much gossip as possible. I inquired who the woman was who kept running about the hall. "She is Trimalchio's wife Fortunata," he said, "and she counts her money by the bushel." "And what was she before?" I asked. "You will pardon me if I say that you would not have taken a piece of bread from her hand. Now, who knows why or wherefore she is queen of Heaven, and Trimalchio's all in all. Fact is, if she tell him that it is dark at midday, he will believe her. He is so enormously wealthy that he himself does not know all he possesses; but his lynx-eyed wife has a plan for everything, even where you least suspect it. She is temperate, sober and thrifty, but she has a shrewish tongue, and henpeck him in his own home. Whom she likes, she likes; whom she dislikes she dislikes. Trimalchio has estates greater than a kite can fly over in a day, and has uncounted millions. There is more plate in his steward's cupboard than other people have in the whole world. And his legion of slaves! My word! I really don't believe that one in ten knows his master by sight! Why, he can knock any of these young wretches into a cocked hat.

"You must not suppose that he buys anything. Everything is produced by him; wool, citrons, pepper; even pigeon's milk. Just to show you, his sheep were growing a poor quality of wool, so he bought ram from Tarentum to improve his flocks. He had bees consigned from Athens to give him Attic honey on the spot; the Roman bees incidentally will be improved by breeding with the Greeks. A few days ago he sent to India for a cargo of mushroom spawn. And every mule he has is the child of a wild ass. Note these cushions: every one has purple or scarlet stuffing. He is nothing if not extravagant.

"But do not be contemptuous of his fellow freedmen. They are saturated with money. Do you see that one lying at the bottom of the end sofa? Well, he has his eight hundred thousand. He was quite a nobody. He started by carrying loads of wood on his back. People do say—I can't vouch for it but I have heard—that he pulled off a goblin's cap and found a hidden treasure. I am jealous of nobody receiving favours of providence. He still shows the marks of his master's fingers but he has an exalted opinion of himself. So he has just put up a sign on his door:

Libra butchers, and perfumers, and various tradesmen; poisoners and assassins under Scorpio; under Sagittarius cross-eyed men, who take the bacon while they look at the cabbage; under Capricornus the poor toilers whose troubles cause horns to sprout on them; under Aquarius, inn-keepers and men with water on the brain; under Pisces chefs and orators. So the world turns round like a mill, and always brings evil in one form or another, causing the birth of men or their death. And you saw the green turf in the middle surmounted by the honeycomb? Even that has significance. Mother Earth lies in the world's midst rounded like an egg, within which all blessings are contained as in a honeycomb."

"Excellent!" we all cried, vowing with our hands uplifted that even Hipparchus and Aratus were inferior to him. Just then servants appeared and spread over the couches coverlets embroidered with scenes of nets and hunters lying in wait with spears, and all the instruments of the chase. We were still wondering what next to expect when a deafening shout arose outside the dining-room and in rushed some Spartan hounds, leaping round the tables. A tray was brought in after them with a wild boar of huge proportions upon it, wearing a cap of freedom; two little baskets woven of palm-twigs were hanging from its tusks, one full of dry dates and the other of fresh. Round it lay sucking-pigs made of pastry with their snouts to the teats, thereby showing that we had a sow before us. These sucking-pigs were for the guests to take away. Carver, who had dealt with the fowls, did not carve the boar, but a tall bearded man with leggings round his legs, and a spangled silken hunting-cape, who drew a hunting-knife and plunged it hard into the boar's side. Whereupon a number of thrushes flew out and were immediately caught by fowlers standing with limed twigs. Trimalchio ordered each guest to be given one, and added: "Now you see what fine acorns our boar has been eating." Then boys came and took the baskets which hung from its tusks and distributed fresh and dry dates to the guests.

Meantime I had got a quiet corner to myself, and had begun to ponder,—why the pig had come in decorated with a cap of freedom. After speculating on the problem without arriving at a satisfactory conclusion, I ventured to put the question which was troubling me to my old informant. "Your humble servant can explain that too," he said. "There is no mystery, the thing is as clear as daylight. Yesterday when this animal was served as *pièce de résistance* at dinner, the guests turned him down; and so today he comes back to dinner as a freedman." I cursed my stupidity and determined to ask no more questions, for fear of showing that I had never dined among decent people.

As we were speaking, a lovely boy crowned with vineleaves and ivy impersonating Bacchus in ecstasy, Bacchus full of wine, Bacchus dreaming, brought round grapes in a little basket, and rendered one of Tri-

and painfully to our abode, bruising our feet on every stone in the road.

But when at last, holding each other up, we drew near our goal, there ahead of us were three others, of big and brawny build, expending the full energy of their strength upon our doorposts. And far from being in the least dismayed by our arrival, they seemed only fired to a greater zeal and made assault more fiercely. Quite naturally, it seemed clear to us both, and especially to me, that they were robbers, and of the most dangerous sort. So I forthwith drew the blade which I carry hidden under my cloak for such emergencies, and threw myself, undismayed, into the midst of these highwaymen. One after another, as they successively tried to withstand me, I ran them through, until finally all three lay stretched at my feet, riddled with many a gaping wound, through which they yielded up their breath. By this time Fotis, the maid, had been aroused by the din of battle, and still panting and perspiring freely I slipped in through the opening door, and, as weary as though I had fought with the three-formed Geryon instead of those pugnacious thieves, I yielded myself at one and the same moment to bed and to slumber.

Soon rosy-fingered Dawn, shaking the purple reins, was guiding her steeds across the path of heaven; and, snatched from my untroubled rest, night gave me back to day. Dismay seized my soul at the recollection of my deeds of the past evening. I sat there, crouching on my bed, with my interlaced fingers hugging my knees, and freely gave way to my distress; I already saw in fancy the court, the jury, the verdict, the executioner. How could I hope to find any judge so mild, so benevolent as to pronounce me innocent, soiled as I was with a triple murder, stained with the blood of so many citizens? Was this the glorious climax of my travels that the Chaldean, Diophanes, had so confidently predicted for me? Again and again I went over the whole matter bewailing my hard lot.

Hereupon there came a pounding at our doors and a steadily growing clamour on the threshold. No sooner was admission given than, with an impetuous rush, the whole house was filled with magistrates, police, and the motley crowd that followed. Two officers, by order of the magistrates, promptly laid hands upon me, and started to drag me off, though resistance was the last thing I should have thought of. By the time we had reached the first cross street the entire city was already trailing at our heels in an astonishingly dense mass. And I marched gloomily along with my head hanging down to the very earth—I might even say to the lower regions below the earth.

At length after having made the circuit of every city square, in exactly the way that the victims are led around before a sacrifice meant to ward off evil omens, I was brought into the forum and made to confront the tribunal of justice. The magistrates had taken their seats

Having thus spoken, the remorseless prosecutor suspended his vindictive utterance, and the court crier straightway ordered me to begin in defence, if I had any to make. At first I could not sufficiently control my voice to speak, although less overcome, alas, by the harshness of the accusation than by my own guilty conscience. But at last, miraculously inspired with courage, I made answer as follows:

"I realise how hard it is for a man accused of murder, and confronted with the bodies of three of your citizens, to persuade so large a multitude of his innocence, even though he tells the exact truth and voluntarily admits the facts. But if in mercy you will give me an attentive hearing I shall easily make clear to you that far from deserving to be put on trial for my life, I have wrongfully incurred the heavy stigma of such a crime as the chance result of justifiable indignation.

"I was making my way home from a dinner party at a rather late hour, after drinking pretty freely, I won't attempt to deny—for that was the head and front of my offence—when, lo and behold! before the very doors of my abode, before the home of the good Milo, your fellow citizen, I beheld a number of villainous thieves trying to effect an entrance and already prying the doors off from the twisted hinges. All the locks and bolts, so carefully closed for the night, had been wrenched away, and the thieves were planning the slaughter of the inmates. Finally, one of them, bigger and more active than the rest, urged them to action with these words:

"'Come on, boys! Show the stuff you are made of, and strike for all you are worth while they are asleep! No quarter now, no faint-hearted weakening! Let death go through the house with drawn sword. If you find any in bed, slit their throats before they wake; if any try to resist, cut them down. Our only chance of getting away safe and sound is to leave no one else safe and sound in the whole house.'

"I confess, citizens, that I was badly frightened, both on account of my hosts and myself; and believing that I was doing the duty of a good citizen, I drew the sword which always accompanies me in readiness for such dangers, and started in to drive away or lay low these desperate robbers. But the barbarous and inhuman villains, far from being frightened away, had the audacity to stand against me, although they saw that I was armed. Their serried ranks opposed me. Next, the leader, a standard-bearer of the band, assailing me with brawny strength, seized me with both hands by the hair, and bending me backward, prepared to beat out my brains with a paving stone; but while he was still shouting for one, with an unerring stroke I luckily ran him through and stretched him at my feet. Before long a second stroke, aimed between the shoulders, finished off another of them, as he clung tooth and nail to his legs; while the third one, as he rashly advanced, I stabbed full in the chest.

tually relieve the public of all apprehension of danger from this desperate gang."

Immediately, in accordance with the Greek usage, fire and the wheel were brought forth, together with all the other instruments of torture. Now indeed my distress was not only increased but multiplied when I saw that I was fated to perish piecemeal. But at this point the old woman, whose noisy lamentations had become a nuisance, broke out with this demand:

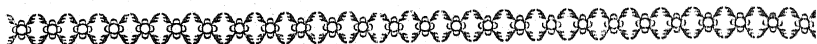
"Honoured citizens, before you proceed to torture the prisoner, on account of the dear ones whom he has taken from me, will you not permit the bodies of the deceased to be uncovered in order that the sight of their youth and beauty may fire you with a righteous anger and a severity proportioned to the crime?"

These words were received with applause, and straightway the magistrate commanded that I myself should with my own hand draw off the covering from the bodies lying on the bier. In spite of my struggles and desperate determination not to look again upon the consequences of my last night's deed, the court attendants promptly dragged me forward, in obedience to the judge's order, and bending my arm by main force from its place at my side stretched it out above the three corpses. Conquered in the struggle, I yielded to necessity, and much against my will drew down the covering and exposed the bodies.

Great heavens, what a sight! What a miracle! What a transformation in my whole destiny! I had already begun to look upon myself as a vassal of Proserpine, a bondsman of Hades, and now I could only gasp in impotent amazement at the suddenness of the change; words fail me to express fittingly the astounding metamorphosis. For the bodies of my butchered victims were nothing more nor less than three inflated bladders, whose sides still bore the scars of numerous punctures, which, as I recalled my battle of the previous night, were situated at the very points where I had inflicted gaping wounds upon my adversaries. Hereupon the hilarity, which up to this point had been fairly held in check, swept through the crowd like a conflagration. Some gave themselves up helplessly to an unrestrained extravagance of merriment; others did their best to control themselves, holding their aching sides with both hands. And having all laughed until they could laugh no more, they passed out of the theatre, their backward glances still centred upon me.

From the moment that I had drawn down that funeral pall I stood fixed as if frozen into stone, as powerless to move as any one of the theatre's statues or columns. Nor did I come out of my stupor until Milo, my host, himself approached and clapping me on the shoulder, drew me away with gentle violence, my tears now flowing freely and sobs choking my voice. He led me back to the house by a roundabout way through the least frequented streets, doing his best meanwhile to soothe my nerves





## PERSIA

### Introduction

PERSIA has, more than any other Oriental nation, enriched the poetry of the world. The great epic poet of Persia, Firdawsi, who lived in the tenth century A.D., wrote the *Shah Nameh*, or *Book of Kings*, an account of the glories of Persia from the earliest times. The best known of the Persian poems is the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, no doubt due to its classic translation by Edward FitzGerald. Beside this gem of Omar, we have the famous lyrics of Saadi in his *Gulistan* (*Rose-Garden*) and *Bustan* (*Fruit-Garden*).

The short stories in Persia owe their origin to wandering literateurs who invented their tales for the amusement of patrons. These tales were invariably concerned with treasure or love; in either instance the motive being to acquire treasure or lady love, by accident or stratagem, by fair means or foul. The story teller was not concerned with psychology or psychoanalysis. His object was simply to create a hero whose mission in life was to procure immense wealth or the most beautiful damsel in the world, solely for the sake of possession. Inasmuch as the Persian story-teller's audience had been suckled on superstitions, it is not surprising that he frequently introduces, in a most nonchalant manner, denizens of the supernatural world.



### ABUL KASIM MANSUR FIRDAWSI

(935-1025 A.D.)

FIRDAWSI, born in Tus, composed the greatest Persian Epic, the *Shah Nameh*, or *Book of Kings*. This celebrated epic compares favorably in scope and beauty with the *Nibelungenlied*. He was exceedingly encouraged in his work by Mahmud of Ghazna who admired Firdawsi's brilliant mind, profound knowledge of ancient history, and poetic genius; to such an extent that he ordered his treasurer to pay the poet a thousand gold pieces for every thousand verses. The task was not completed for forty years, and by that time, the story has it, the monarch forgot his promise of payment. *Feridun and His Three Sons* is one of the episodes that make up this marvellous epic of the splendours of ancient Persia.

From Rúm, and Chín, bring overwhelming troops,  
Inured to war, and shower disgrace and ruin  
On him and Persia."

When the messenger arrived at the court of Feridún, and had obtained permission to appear in the presence of the king, he kissed the ground respectfully, and by command related the purpose of his journey. Feridún was surprised and displeased, and said, in reply:

"Have I done wrong, done evil? None, but good.  
I gave ye kingdoms, that was not a crime;  
But if ye fear not me, at least fear God.  
My ebbing life approaches to an end,  
And the possessions of this fleeting world  
Will soon pass from me. I am grown too old  
To have my passions roused by this rebellion;  
All I can do is, with paternal love,  
To counsel peace. Be with your lot contented;  
Seek not unnatural strife, but cherish peace."

After the departure of the messenger Feridún called Irij before him, and said: "Thy two brothers, who are older than thou art, have confederated together, and threaten to bring a large army against thee for the purpose of seizing thy kingdom, and putting thee to death. I have received this information from a messenger, who further says, that if I take thy part they will also wage war upon me." And after Irij had declared that in this extremity he was anxious to do whatever his father might advise, Feridún continued: "My son, thou art unable to resist the invasion of even one brother; it will, therefore, be impossible for thee to oppose both. I am now aged and infirm, and my only wish is to pass the remainder of my days in retirement and repose. Better, then, will it be for thee to pursue the path of peace and friendship, and like me throw away all desire for dominion.

For if the sword of anger is unsheathed,  
And war comes on, thy head will soon be freed  
From all the cares of government and life.  
There is no cause for thee to quit the world,  
The path of peace and amity is thine."

Irij agreed with his father, and declared that he would willingly sacrifice his throne and diadem rather than go to war with his brothers.

"Look at the Heavens, how they roll on;  
And look at man, how soon he's gone.  
A breath of wind, and then no more;  
A world like this, should man deplore?"

even the kingdom of Túrán may fall into his hands, since the hearts of our soldiers have become so attached to him."

Again, Sílím said to Túr: "Thou must put Irij to death, and then his kingdom will be thine." Túr readily undertook to commit that crime, and, on the following day, at an interview with Irij, he said to him: "Why didst thou consent to be the ruler of Persia, and fail in showing a proper regard for the interests of thy elder brothers? Whilst our barren kingdoms are constantly in a state of warfare with the Turks, thou art enjoying peace and tranquillity upon the throne of a fruitful country? Must we, thy elder brothers, remain thus under thy commands, and in subordinate stations?

Must thou have gold and treasure,  
And thy heart be wrapt in pleasure,  
Whilst we, thy elder born,  
Of our heritage are shorn?  
Must the youngest still be nursed,  
And the elder branches cursed?  
And condemned, by stern command,  
To a wild and sterile land?"

When Irij heard these words from Túr, he immediately replied, saying:

"I only seek tranquillity and peace;  
I look not on the crown of sovereignty,  
Nor seek a name among the Persian host;  
And though the throne and diadem are mine,  
I here renounce them, satisfied to lead  
A private life. For what hath ever been  
The end of earthly power and pomp, but darkness?  
I seek not to contend against my brothers;  
Why should I grieve their hearts, or give distress  
To any human being? I am young,  
And Heaven forbid that I should prove unkind!"

Notwithstanding, however, these declarations of submission, and repeated assurances of his resolution to resign the monarchy of Persia, Túr would not believe one word. In a moment he sprang up, and furiously seizing the golden chair from which he had just risen, struck a violent blow with it on the head of Irij, calling aloud, "Bind him, bind him!" The youth, struggling on the ground, exclaimed: "O, think of thy father, and pity me! Have compassion on thy own soul! I came for thy protection, therefore do not take my life: if thou dost, my blood will call out for vengeance to the Almighty. I ask only for peace and retirement. Think of my father, and pity me!

"O Heaven, look down upon my murdered boy;  
His severed head before me, but his body  
Torn by those hungry wolves! O grant my prayer,  
That I may see, before I die, the seed  
Of Irij hurl just vengeance on the heads  
Of his assassins; hear, O hear my prayer."  
—Thus he in sorrow for his favourite son  
Obscured the light which might have sparkled still,  
Withering the jasmine flower of happy days;  
So that his pale existence looked like death.

Feridún continued to cherish with the fondest affection the memory of his murdered son, and still looked forward with anxiety to the anticipated hour of retribution. He fervently hoped that a son might be born to take vengeance for his father's death. But it so happened that Mahafríð, the wife of Irij, gave birth to a daughter. When this daughter grew up, Feridún gave her in marriage to Pishung, and from that union an heir was born who in form and feature resembled Irij and Feridún. He was called Minúchihr, and great rejoicings took place on the occasion of his birth.

The old man's lips, with smiles apart,  
Bespoke the gladness of his heart.  
And in his arms he took the boy,  
The harbinger of future joy;  
Delighted that indulgent Heaven  
To his fond hopes this pledge had given.  
It seemed as if, to bless his reign,  
Irij had come to life again.

The child was nourished with great tenderness during his infancy, and when he grew up he was sedulously instructed in every art necessary to form the character, and acquire the accomplishments of a warrior. Feridún was accustomed to place him on the throne, and decorate his brows with the crown of sovereignty; and the soldiers enthusiastically acknowledged him as their king, urging him to rouse himself and take vengeance of his enemies for the murder of his grandfather. Having opened his treasury, Feridún distributed abundance of gold among the people, so that Minúchihr was in a short time enabled to embody an immense army, by whom he was looked upon with attachment and admiration.

When Sílim and Túr were informed of the preparations that were making against them, that Minúchihr, having grown to manhood, was distinguished for his valour and intrepidity, and that multitudes flocked to his standard with the intention of forwarding his purpose of revenge, they were seized with inexpressible terror, and anticipated an immediate

Yes, and they shall, surrounded by his soldiers,  
And clad in steel, and they shall feel the edge  
Of life-destroying swords. Yes, they shall see him!"

After uttering this indignant speech, Feridún shewed to the messenger his great warriors, one by one. He shewed him Kavah and his two sons, Shalpúr, and Shírúeh, and Kárun, and Sám, and Naríman, and other chiefs—all of admirable courage and valor in war,—and thus resumed:

"Hence with your presents, hence, away,  
Can gold or gems turn night to day?  
Must kingly heads be bought and sold,  
And shall I barter blood for gold?  
Shall gold a father's heart entice,  
Blood to redeem beyond all price?  
Hence, hence with treachery; I have heard  
Their glozing falsehoods, every word;  
But human feelings guide my will,  
And keep my honours sacred still.  
True is the oracle we read:—  
'Those who have sown oppression's seed  
Reap bitter fruit; their souls, perplexed,  
Joy not in this world or the next.'  
The brothers of my murdered boy,  
Who could a father's hopes destroy,  
An equal punishment will reap,  
And lasting vengeance o'er them sweep.  
They rooted up my favourite tree,  
But yet a branch remains to me.  
Now the young lion comes apace,  
The glory of his glorious race;  
He comes apace, to punish guilt,  
Where brother's blood was basely spilt;  
And blood alone for blood must pay;  
Hence with your gold, depart, away!"

When the messenger heard these reproaches, mingled with poison, he immediately took leave, and trembling with fear, returned to Sílim and Túr with the utmost speed. He described to them in strong and alarming terms the appearance and character of Minúchihir, and his warriors; of that noble youth who with frowning eyebrows was only anxious for battle. He then communicated to them in what manner he had been received, and repeated the denunciations of Feridún, at which the brothers were exceedingly grieved and disappointed. But Sílim said to Túr:

"Let us be first upon the field, before  
He marshals his array. It follows not,  
That he should be a hero bold and valiant,

If savage monsters were to fly your presence,  
It would not be surprising. Those who die  
In this most righteous cause will go to Heaven,  
With all their sins forgotten!" Then Kabád  
Went to the king, and told the speech of Túr:  
A smile played o'er the cheek of Minúchihr  
As thus he spoke: "A boaster he must be,  
Or a vain fool, for when engaged in battle,  
Vigour of arm and the enduring soul,  
Will best be proved. I ask but for revenge—  
Vengeance for Irij slain. Meanwhile, return;  
We shall not fight today."

He too retired,  
And in his tent upon the sandy plain,  
Ordered the festive board to be prepared,  
And wine and music whiled the hours away.

When morning dawned the battle commenced, and multitudes were slain on both sides.

The spacious plain became a sea of blood;  
It seemed as if the earth was covered o'er  
With crimson tulips; slippery was the ground,  
And all in dire confusion.

The army of Minúchihr was victorious, owing to the bravery and skill of the commander. But Heaven was in his favour.

In the evening Sílím and Túr consulted together, and came to the resolution of effecting a formidable night attack on the enemy. The spies of Minúchihr, however, obtained information of this intention, and communicated the secret to the king. Minúchihr immediately placed the army in charge of Kárun, and took himself thirty thousand men to wait in ambuscade for the enemy, and frustrate his views. Túr advanced with a hundred thousand men; but as he advanced, he found every one on the alert, and aware of his approach. He had gone too far to retreat in the dark without fighting, and therefore began a vigorous conflict. Minúchihr sprung up from his ambuscade, and with his thirty thousand men rushed upon the centre of the enemy's troops, and in the end encountered Túr. The struggle was not long. Minúchihr dexterously using his javelin, hurled him from his saddle precipitately to the ground, and then with his dagger severed the head from his body. The body he left to be devoured by the beasts of the field, and the head he sent as a trophy to Feridún; after which, he proceeded in search of Sílím.

The army of the confederates, however, having suffered such signal a defeat, Sílím thought it prudent to fall back and take refuge in a fort. But Minúchihr went in pursuit, and besieged the castle. One day a

## THE TREASURE OF MANSUR

THE author of the following story is not known. It was inscribed in the margins of a valuable work on Mongol history which, with other literary collections, was presented to the Bodleian Library by travellers in Persia. It aptly illustrates the chief subject matter of the Persian story-teller.

The present version is from a translation by Reuben Levy, M.A., of MS. Ouseley 187, page 187 (margin), Bodleian Library. Copyright, 1923, by Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, by whose permission it is here reprinted.

## THE TREASURE OF MANSUR

THERE was once a prince of Baghdad, famed for his richness and the vastness of his treasures. He had one son, Mansur, whom he loved dearly, and whom he had reared with the greatest care. He engaged the wisest philosophers and the most learned tutors to teach him, so that he understood the languages of east and west. With the passage of time, the prince became aware that the day of his death was near. Therefore, summoning Mansur, he spoke to him as follows: 'My son, I am about to depart and you will be left alone to deal with the great treasures which I bequeath to you. Spend it not except by measure, and ponder well on all you do.'

The next day the prince died, and Mansur mourned for him. So eager, however, was he to behold his father's treasures that at the end of three days he cast off his mourning, and, taking the keys of the treasure-house with him, he made his way into it. He remained astonished at the sight of the gold and jewels which were heaped there, and thought to himself: 'Why did my father warn me so earnestly, for here is more than I can ever spend?' He therefore commanded his servants to bring out chests full of gold and jewels, and the next day he set about planning the building of gardens and palaces which would excel in splendour all that had ever been built before. His gardens were filled with the finest fruit-trees, and under each was set a couch of precious wood inlaid with gold and jewels.

Thus Mansur continued, until at last his treasurehouses were empty. By degrees he was compelled to sell his gardens and fine houses until only one remained, and soon he decided that he would sell this too. With the money he would buy merchandise and travel into foreign countries, where he could acquire wealth again.

This he did. He sold his last house, loaded a caravan, and set out for Mosul, where he arrived after a long journey. He found it a fine

carried home a sum of money. One day, two Indians, richly dressed, came to sit down near him. They called to him to bring them some of his wares, and he set his tray before them. They made him sit down with them, telling him to remain with them to amuse them for the whole day, and not to go to any one else. Mansur said that he would place himself at their service, and sat down with them to eat and drink.

Very soon the two Indians were drunk, and, holding out some gold dinars, told Mansur to play and sing and amuse them with stories. When at last they were too dazed with wine to hear more, they began to speak to each other in the Indian tongue, not knowing that Mansur could understand them. He heard one of them say, 'The gold which we brought is finished, we must go out to-night and find sufficient for our needs.' The other, however, replied: 'No, I brought enough for a month.' This filled Mansur with the thought that the two men must in some place have a store of gold, and he therefore determined to discover what further information he could concerning the two men, and so find out whence they got their gold and their wealth. He remained in their company until one hour after sunset, then taking up the accoutrement which they had brought with them, they departed.

Mansur hastened to his friend and told her that he intended to go to his own lodging that night. 'The way is long,' said he, 'and if you have a sword I pray you give it to me.' The woman gave him a sword, and Mansur hastened away in pursuit of the two men. He followed them outside the town and into the desert. There they sat down, and he heard them say to each other that they must go warily and see that no one followed them. Mansur at this crept into a hole which he found, fortunately for himself, for one of the two Indians turned back a little way to see if any one was about. Again they proceeded until they reached a certain tree, under which they halted. Mansur saw them engaged in digging for a little while, then suddenly they disappeared from view. Very cautiously he approached and at last he saw the mouth of a hole, and, inside it, a door. He was just about to descend, when one of the Indians appeared with a bag upon his back. As soon as he emerged Mansur sprang upon him with his sword and hacked off his head. The bag fell to the ground, but as Mansur was about to bend down to open it, the other Indian appeared, also carrying a bag. Swiftly Mansur turned upon him, sword in hand, and slew him too. Then he opened both bags and found them filled with pearls.

In great haste he descended into the hole and beheld before him a vestibule, very long and dark. As he proceeded along it, it began to grow lighter, and he made his way towards the spot whence the light came. Soon he beheld an enormous palace, in the midst of which was a great fountain surrounded by ten gold pillars, ornamented with jewels. By each pillar was set a jewel-encrusted throne and great vats full of



thousand dirhams every day, and that is sufficient to defray all the expenditure of Cairo. I say this, however, on condition that you are content with what I pay and do not demand more.' The vizier swore an oath that he would not demand more, thinking that if he slew Mansur he would derive no profit. He therefore dismissed him, saying: 'For my part, if you have found a thousand treasures you are welcome to them.' But he sent a messenger to Mansur to bring back the first day's payment.

Some time elapsed and then the story of the treasure was brought to the Sultan. He summoned the vizier and asked him concerning Mansur, and then he called Mansur before him. He treated him with great condescension, and said: 'Young man, if you discover to me this treasure which you have found, I will take but one fifth of it and leave the rest to you.' Mansur replied: 'An oath has been laid upon me not to disclose my secret to a living soul, and if I were to be cut into a thousand pieces I would not speak of it. I will pay, however, daily, the sum of twelve thousand dinars in gold.' The matter was thus arranged, and the Sultan bade the vizier to put on Mansur a robe of honour, and to publish his name abroad with great ceremony as a public benefactor.

When Mansur had departed, the Sultan began to consider how great the treasure of Mansur must be if he could afford to pay twelve thousand dinars every day in addition to other great sums. He pondered long, therefore, on the means whereby he could lay his hands on the source of this wealth. As he sat thus engrossed in thought, a favourite slave-girl beheld him and asked what schemes possessed him. He told her what he had in mind, and she replied that she would gain for him what he desired. He promised that if she succeeded he would give her one of his palaces for her own, and would keep her with him always.

Now it happened that Mansur's custom was to sit in his courtyard every day, with a chest of gold by his side. Beggars and other needy persons came in streams to ask his aid, and, being given what they desired, passed on. On the day after Mansur had visited the Sultan, a maiden joined the stream of people at Mansur's house, and, as she passed by him, she uncovered her face and smiled at him bewitchingly, saying that she had a request to make in private. Mansur, greatly delighted with her beauty, bade her go into the house, and he followed. There he bade food and wine to be brought, and, while they ate and drank, Mansur became more and more enamoured of her. At last he asked what her need was, and she replied: 'I have heard that you have found a rich treasure, and I am consumed with desire to behold it.' Mansur laughed aloud at this, but after much persuasion he at last consented. He put on a cloak, took a sword, and bade the girl accompany him. When they arrived outside the city, he blindfolded his companion securely with a kerchief, and led her to the underground chamber. There he uncovered



## ARABIA

### Introduction

PROFESSOR CLEMENT HUART gives a very interesting account of the origins of Arabic poetry. The camel's steady swing in his pace across the monotonous desert bent the rider's body almost double and taught him to sing rhymes. The Arab soon noted that as he hurried the pace of his recitation, the string of camels would raise their heads and step out with quickened pace. Thus we have the *hidâ*, the song of the leading camel-driver of the caravan. It is quite a step from the *hidâ* to the works of the famous pre-Mahommedan poets, such as Imru'u'l-Qais, Tarafa, and 'Antara, whose poems had been collected by Asma'i about the beginning of the ninth century. But this is explained by the fact that the desert Arabs were of a nomadic temperament whose poets merely recited their poems without putting them on paper. In the inter-tribal wars many of the poets were slain, and their works were, except in rare cases, forgotten. So that while there had been a gradual development of poetic literature we have only the works of the transcribed poets to gauge this development.

The most remarkable collection of Arabian—or for that matter Oriental—stories which has delighted the civilised world is contained in the *Thousand and One Nights*, or *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*. Some of the celebrated stories that go to make this masterly compendium of Oriental life,—town life as differentiated from the desert life portrayed in the epic poems previously mentioned,—have probably been taken from the Sanskrit through the Persians, but the Arab story-tellers have contributed so much glamour, such vivid colour to their tales that the reader need not be troubled about original sources. What is surprising, however, is that while the *Arabian Nights* had appeared as far back as the fourteenth century (certain parts of it as early as the tenth), it was not until the eighteenth century that a translation was made into the French by Antoine Galland.

prostrate before the Ka'abah-temple. And when he had circuited the Holy House, and fulfilled all the rites and ceremonies required of palmers, he set up a shop for sale of merchandise. By chance two merchants passing along that street espied the fine stuffs and goods in Ali Khwajah's booth and approved much of them and praised their beauty and excellence. Presently quoth one to other, "This man bringeth here most rare and costly goods: now in Cairo, the capital of Egyptland, would he get full value for them, and far more than in the markets of this city." Hearing mention of Cairo, Ali Khwajah conceived a sore longing to visit that famous capital, so he gave up his intent of return Baghdad-ward and purposed wayfaring to Egypt. Accordingly he joined a caravan and arriving thither was well-pleased with the place, both country and city; and selling his merchandise he made great gain therefrom. Then buying other goods and stuffs he purposed to make Damascus; but for one full month he tarried at Cairo and visited her sanctuaries and saintly places, and after leaving her walls he solaced himself with seeing many famous cities distant several days' journey from the capital along the banks of the River Nilus. Presently, bidding adieu to Egypt he arrived at the Sanctified House, Jerusalem, and prayed in the temple of the Banu Isra'il which the Moslems had re-edified. In due time he reached Damascus and observed that the city was well builded and much peopled, and that the fields and meads were well-watered with springs and channels and that the gardens and vergiers were laden with flowers and fruits. Amid such delights Ali Khwajah hardly thought of Baghdad; withal he ceased not to pursue his journey through Aleppo, Mosul, and Shiraz, tarrying some time at all of these towns, especially at Shiraz, till at length after seven years of wayfaring he came back to Baghdad.

For seven long years the Baghdad merchant never once thought of Ali Khwajah or of the trust committed to his charge; till one day as his wife sat at meat with him at the evening meal, their talk by chance was of olives. Quoth she to him, "I would now fain have some that I may eat of them"; and quoth he, "As thou speakest thereof I bethink me of that Ali Khwajah who seven years ago fared on a pilgrimage to Meccah, and ere he went left in trust with me a jar of Sparrow-olives which still cumbereth the storehouse. Who knoweth where he is or what hath betided him? A man who lately returned with the Hajj-caravan brought me word that Ali Khwajah had quitted Meccah the Magnified with intent to journey on to Egypt. Allah Almighty alone knoweth an he be still alive or he be now dead; however, if his olives be in good condition I will go bring some hither that we may taste them: so give me a platter and a lamp that I may fetch thee somewhat of them." His wife, an honest woman and an upright, made answer, "Allah forbid that thou shouldst do a deed so base and break thy word and covenant. Who can tell? Thou art not assured by any of his death; perchance he

Allah, the All-present and the All-seeing, be my witness that, when I went on my pilgrimage to Meccah the Magnified, I left a thousand Ashrafis in that jar, and now I find them not. Canst thou tell me aught concerning them? An thou in thy sore need have made use of them, it mattereth not so thou wilt give them back as soon as thou art able." The merchant, apparently pitying him, said, "O good my friend, thou didst thyself with thine hand set the jar inside the store-room. I wist not that thou hadst aught in it save olives; yet as thou didst leave it, so in like manner didst thou find it and carry it away; and now thou chargest me with theft of Ashrafis. It seemeth strange and passing strange that thou shouldst make such accusation. When thou wentest thou madest no mention of any money in the jar, but saidst that it was full of olives, even as thou hast found it. Hadst thou left gold coins therein, then surely thou wouldst have recovered them." Hereupon Ali Khwajah begged hard with much entreaty, saying, "Those thousand Ashrafis were all I owned, the money earned by years of toil: I do beseech thee have pity on my case and give them back to me." Replied the merchant, waxing wroth with great wrath, "O my friend, a fine fellow thou art to talk of honesty and withal make such false and lying charge. Begone: hie thee hence and come not to my house again; for now I know thee as thou art, a swindler and impostor." Hearing this dispute between Ali Khwajah and the merchant all the people of the quarter came crowding to the shop; and thus it became well known to all, rich and poor, within the city of Baghdad how that one Ali Khwajah had hidden a thousand Ashrafis within a jar of olives and had placed it on trust with a certain merchant; moreover how, after pilgrimaging to Meccah and seven years of travel the poor man had returned, and that the rich man had gainsaid his words anent the gold and was ready to make oath that he had not received any trust of the kind. At length, when naught else availed, Ali Khwajah was constrained to bring the matter before the Kazi, and to claim one thousand Ashrafis of his false friend. The Judge asked, "What witnesses hast thou who may speak for thee?" and the plaintiff answered, "O my lord the Kazi, I feared to tell the matter to any man lest all come to know of my secret. Allah Almighty is my sole testimony. This merchant was my friend and I recked not that he would prove dishonest and unfaithful." Quoth the Judge, "Then must I needs send for the merchant and hear what he saith on oath"; and when the defendant came they made him swear by all he deemed holy, facing Ka'abah-wards with hands uplifted, and he cried, "I swear that I know naught of any Ashrafis belonging to Ali Khwajah." Hereat the Kazi pronounced him innocent and dismissed him from court; and Ali Khwajah went home sad at heart and said to himself, "Alas, what justice is this which hath been meted out to me, that I should lose my money, and my just cause be deemed unjust! It hath been truly said: He loseth

jar and bring hither some of the contents that I may see the state in which the Asafiri-olives actually are." Then tasting of the fruit, "How is this? I find their flavor is fresh and their state excellent. Surely during the lapse of seven twelve-months the olives would have become mouldy and rotten. Bring now before me two oil-merchants of the town that they may pass opinion upon them." Then two other of the boys assumed the parts commanded and coming into court stood before the Kazi, who asked "Are ye olive-merchants by trade?" They answered, "We are and this hath been our calling for many generations, and in buying and selling olives we earn our daily bread." Then said the Kazi, "Tell me now how long do olives keep fresh and well-flavoured?" and said they, "O my lord, however carefully we keep them, after the third year they change flavour and colour and become no longer fit for food, in fact they are good only to be cast away." Thereupon quoth the boy-Kazi "Examine me now these olives that are in this jar and say me how old are they and what is their condition and savour." The two boys who played the parts of oil-merchants pretended to take some berries from the jar and taste them and presently they said, "O our lord the Kazi, these olives are in fair condition and full-flavoured." Quoth the Kazi, "Ye speak falsely, for 'tis seven years since Ali Khwajah put them in the jar as he was about to go a-pilgrimage"; and quoth they, "Say whatso thou wilt, those olives are of this year's growth, and there is not an oil-merchant in all Baghdad but who will agree with us." Moreover the accused was made to taste and smell the fruits and he could not but admit that it was even so as they had avouched. Then said the boy-Kazi to the boy-defendant, "'Tis clear thou art a rogue and a rascal, and thou hast done a deed wherefor thou richly deservest the gibbet." Hearing this the children frisked about and clapped their hands with glee and gladness, then seizing hold of him who acted as the merchant of Baghdad, they led him off as to execution. The Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, was greatly pleased at this acuteness of the boy who had assumed the part of judge in the play, and commanded his Wazir Ja'afar saying, "Mark well the lad who enacted the Kazi in this mock-trial and see that thou produce him on the morrow: he shall try the case in my presence substantially and in real earnest, even as we have heard him deal with it in play. Summon also the Kazi of this city that he may learn the administration of justice from this child. Moreover send word to Ali Khwajah bidding him bring with him the jar of olives, and have also in readiness two oil-merchants of the town." Thus as they walked along the Caliph gave orders to the Wazir and then returned to his palace. So on the morrow Ja'afar the Barmaki went to that quarter of the town where the children had enacted the mock-trial and asked the schoolmaster where his scholars might be, and he answered, "They have all gone away, each to his home." So the Minister visited the houses pointed out to him

## FRANCE

### Introduction

**M**EDIÆVAL France was divided not only geographically into north and south, but also in the matter of its literature: in the north, the *trouvères* composed or sang the epic, lyric and the *fabliaux*; in the south, the more gallant and aristocratic troubadours composed their lyric melodies of love with which the *jougleurs* or *jongleurs*, professional entertainers, would entertain the populace in the market place or the nobility in the hall.

The earliest French poetry to influence European literature is the *chanson de geste*, or song of deed, the foremost of which is the *Chanson de Roland*. Another form of poetry, which might be called story in verse form, is the *lay*, a form greatly cultivated by Marie de France who wrote about 1175. A much more famous individual and contemporary was Chrétien de Troyes, who is important in the development of the French Arthurian cycle.

It is not until the Renaissance that we discover the development of prose. In much of it we can trace the influence of Boccaccio. Particularly is this true of Marguerite de Navarre, Bonaventure des Périers, Noël du Fail, and others who, in keeping with the period, wrote exceedingly racy tales. But this century produced a far greater master in Rabelais, who more than any other author helped to create French prose.

With the exception of Perrault and Madame d'Aulnoy, who wrote delightful fairy tales that have since become children's classics, the seventeenth century was given over mainly to the drama. In the following century, the moral tale which found its counterpart in the works of Addison, Steele, and Goldsmith, was cultivated, and was especially practised by Marmontel. At the same time the novel was further developed, the outstanding masterpieces of the period being *Gil Blas*, by Le Sage, and *Manon Lescaut*, by Abbé Prévost. But most of the great writers of the time were essayists. In spite of an apparent frivolity and licentiousness, this was truly an age of reason, and its strength was not in its fiction but rather in its mighty thinkers, Diderot, Rousseau, and Voltaire. These did not, however, limit themselves to any particular form of expression, and we find that Voltaire, who wrote voluminously, is best remembered for his little satiric gem, *Candide*, and some deliciously ironic tales.

The nineteenth century is, without doubt, the richest period of French prose. It also witnessed the full fruition of the short story. It is nearly

nor Paternoster, nor canticle, nor creed, nor Hail Mary, nor aught concerning his soul's salvation.

When the minstrel had joined himself to the Order he marked how the tonsured monks spoke amongst themselves by signs, no words coming from their lips, so he thought within himself that they were dumb. But when he learned that truly it was by way of penance that speech was forbidden to their mouths, and that for holy obedience were they silent, then considered he that silence became him also; and he refrained his tongue from words, so discreetly and for so long a space, that day in, day out, he spake never, save by commandment; so that the cloister often rang with the brothers' mirth. The tumbler moved amongst his fellows like a man ashamed, for he had neither part nor lot in all the business of the monastery, and for this he was right sad and sorrowful. He saw the monks and the penitents about him, each serving God, in this place and that, according to his office and degree. He marked the priests at their ritual before the altars; the deacons at the gospels; the sub-deacons at the epistles; and the ministers about the vigils. This one repeats the introit; this other the lesson; cantors chant from the psalter; penitents spell out the Miserere—for thus are all things sweetly ordered—yea, and the most ignorant amongst them yet can pray his Paternoster. Wherever he went, here or there, in office or cloister, in every quiet corner and nook, there he found five, or three, or two, or at least one. He gazes earnestly, if so he is able, upon each. Such an one laments; this other is in tears; yet another grieves and sighs. He marvels at their sorrow. Then he said, "Holy Mary, what bitter grief have all these men that they smite the breast so grievously! Too sad of heart, meseems, are they who make such bitter dole together. Ah, St. Mary, alas, what words are these I say! These men are calling on the mercy of God, but I—what do I here! Here there is none so mean or vile but who serves God in his office and degree, save only me, for I work not, neither can I preach. Caitif and shamed was I when I thrust myself herein, seeing that I can do nothing well, either in labour or in prayer. I see my brothers upon their errands, one behind the other; but I do naught but fill my belly with the meat that they provide. If they perceive this thing, certainly shall I be in an evil case, for they will cast me out amongst the dogs, and none will take pity on the glutton and the idle man. Truly am I a caitif, set in a high place for a sign." Then he wept for very woe, and would that he was quiet in the grave. "Mary, Mother," quoth he, "pray now your Heavenly Father that He keep me in His pleasure, and give me such good counsel that I may truly serve both Him and you; yea, and may deserve that meat which now is bitter in my mouth."

Driven mad with thoughts such as these, he wandered about the abbey until he found himself within the crypt, and took sanctuary by the altar, crouching close as he was able. Above the altar was carved the statue

here in the crypt will I tumble for your delight. Lady, lead me truly in your way, and for the love of God hold me not in utter despite." Then he smote upon his breast, he sighed and wept most tenderly, since he knew no better prayer than tears. Then he turned him about, and leaped once again. "Lady," said he, "as God is my Saviour, never have I turned this somersault before. Never has tumbler done such a feat, and, certes, it is not bad. Lady, what delight is his who may harbour with you in your glorious manor. For God's love, Lady, grant me such fair hostelry, since I am yours, and am nothing of my own." Once again he did the vault of Metz; again he danced and tumbled. Then when the chants rose louder from the choir, he, too, forced the note, and put forward all his skill. So long as the priest was about that Mass, so long his flesh endured to dance, and leap and spring, till at the last, nigh fainting, he could stand no longer upon his feet, but fell for weariness on the ground. From head to heel sweat stood upon him, drop by drop, as blood falls from meat turning upon the hearth. "Lady," said he, "I can no more, but truly will I seek you again." Fire consumed him utterly. He took his habit once more, and when he was wrapped close therein, he rose to his feet, and bending low before the statue, went his way. "Farewell," said he, "gentlest Friend. For God's love take it not to heart, for so I may I will soon return. Not one Hour shall pass but that I will serve you with right good will, so I may come, and so my service is pleasing in your sight." Thus he went from the crypt, yet gazing on his Lady. "Lady," said he, "my heart is sore that I cannot read your Hours. How would I love them for love of you, most gentle Lady! Into your care I commend my soul and my body."

In this fashion passed many days, for at every Hour he sought the crypt to do service, and pay homage before the Image. His service was so much to his mind that never once was he too weary to set out his most cunning feats to distract the Mother of God, nor did he ever wish for other play than this. Now, doubtless, the monks knew well enough that day by day he sought the crypt, but not a man on earth—save God alone—was aware of aught that passed there; neither would he, for all the wealth of the world, have let his goings in be seen, save by the Lord his God alone. For truly he believed that were his secret once espied he would be hunted from the cloister, and flung once more into the foul, sinful world, and for his part he was more fain to fall on death than to suffer any taint of sin. But God considering his simplicity, his sorrow for all he had wrought amiss, and the love which moved him to this deed, would that this toil should be known; and the Lord willed that the work of His friend should be made plain to men, for the glory of the Mother whom he worshipped, and so that all men should know and hear, and receive that God refuses none who seeks His face in love, however low his degree, save only he love God and strive to do His will.



and His very sweet, dear Mother, so precious and so bright, that in her gentleness she will plead with her Son, her Father, and her Lord, that he may look on this work—if thus it pleases Him—so that the good man be not wrongly blamed, and that God may be the more beloved, yet so that thus is His good pleasure.” Then they secretly sought the crypt and found a privy place near the altar, where they could see, and yet not be seen. From there the Abbot and his monk marked the business of the penitent. They saw the vaults he varied so cunningly, his nimble leaping and his dancing, his salutations of Our Lady, and his springing and his bounding, till he was nigh to faint. So weak was he that he sank on the ground, all outworn, and the sweat fell from his body upon the pavement of the crypt. But presently, in this his need, came she, his refuge, to his aid. Well she knew that guileless heart.

Whilst the Abbot looked, forthwith there came down from the vault a Dame so glorious, that certainly no man had seen one so precious, nor so richly crowned. She was more beautiful than the daughters of men, and her vesture was heavy with gold and gleaming stones. In her train came the hosts of Heaven, angel and archangel also; and these pressed close about the minstrel, and solaced and refreshed him. When their shining ranks drew near, peace fell upon his heart; for they contended to do him service, and were the servants of the servitor of that Dame who is the rarest Jewel of God. Then the sweet and courteous Queen herself took a white napkin in her hand, and with it gently fanned her minstrel before the altar. Courteous and debonair, the Lady refreshed his neck, his body and his brow. Meekly she served him as a handmaid in his need. But these things were hidden from the good man, for he neither saw nor knew that about him stood so fair a company.

The holy angels honour him greatly, but they can no longer stay, for their Lady turns to go. She blesses her minstrel with the sign of God, and the holy angels throng about her, still gazing back with delight upon their companion, for they await the hour when God shall release him from the burden of the world, and they possess his soul.

This marvel the Abbot and his monk saw at least four times, and thus at each Hour came the Mother of God with aid and succour for her man. Never doth she fail her servants in their need. Great joy had the Abbot that this thing was made plain to him. But the monk was filled with shame, since God had shown His pleasure in the service of His poor fool. His confusion burnt him like fire. “Dominus,” said he to the Abbot, “grant me grace. Certainly this is a holy man, and since I have judged him amiss, it is very right that my body should smart. Give me now fast or vigil or the scourge, for without question he is a saint. We are witnesses to the whole matter, nor is it possible that we can be deceived.” But the Abbot replied, “You speak truly, for God has made us to know that He has bound him with the cords of love. So I lay my

tale. He told it with clasped hands, and with tears, and at the close he kissed the Abbot's feet, and sighed.

The holy Abbot leaned above him, and, all in tears, raised him up, kissing both his eyes. "Brother," said he, "hold now your peace, for I make with you this true covenant, that you shall ever be of our monastery. God grant, rather, that we may be of yours, for all the worship you have brought to ours. I and you will call each other friend. Fair, sweet brother, pray you for me, and I for my part will pray for you. And now I pray you, my sweet friend, and lay this bidding upon you, without pretence, that you continue to do your service, even as you were wont heretofore—yea, and with greater craft yet, if so you may." "Lord," said he, "truly is this so?" "Yea," said the Abbot, "and verily." So he charged him, under peril of discipline, to put all doubts from his mind; for which reason the good man rejoiced so greatly that, as telleth the rhyme, he was all bemused, so that the blood left his cheeks, and his knees failed beneath him. When his courage came back, his very heart thrilled with joy; but so perilous was that quickening that therefrom he shortly died. But theretofore with a good heart he went about this service without rest, and Matins and Vespers, night and day, he missed no Hour till he became too sick to perform his office. So sore was his sickness upon him that he might not rise from his bed. Marvellous was the shame he proved when no more was he able to pay his rent. This was the grief that lay the heaviest upon him, for of his sickness he spake never a word but he feared greatly lest he should fall from grace since he travailed no longer at his craft. He reckoned himself an idle man, and prayed God to take him to Himself before the sluggard might come to blame. For it was bitter to him to consider that all about him knew his case, so bitter that the burden was heavier than his heart could bear, yet there without remedy he must lie. The holy Abbot does him all honour; he and his monks chant the Hours about his bed, and in these praises of God he felt such delight that not for them would he have taken the province of Ponton so great was his happiness therein. Fair and contrite was his confessor but still he was not at peace; yet why say more of this, for the hour has struck, and he must rise and go.

The Abbot was in that cell with all his monks; there, too, was company of many a priest and many a canon. These all humbly watched the dying man, and saw with open eyes this wonder happen. Clear to their very sight, about that lowly bed, stood the Mother of God, with angel and archangel, to wait the passing of his soul. Over against them were set, like wild beasts, devils and the Adversary, so they might snatch his spirit. I speak not to you in parable. But little profit had they for all their coming, their waiting, and their straining on the leash. Never might they have part in such a soul as his. When the soul took leave of his body, it fell not in their hands at all, for the Mother of God

## THE HUSBAND WHO WAS BLIND OF AN EYE

(From the *Heptameron*, Novel 6)

CHARLES, the last Duke of Alençon, had an old valet-de-chambre who was blind of an eye, and who was married to a woman much younger than himself. The duke and duchess liked this valet better than any other domestic of that order in their household, and the consequence was that he could not go and see his wife as often as he could have wished, whilst she, unable to accommodate herself to circumstances, so far forgot her honour and her conscience as to fall in love with a young gentleman of the neighbourhood. At last the affair got wind, and there was so much talk about it, that it reached the ears of the husband, who could not believe it, so warm was the affection testified to him by his wife. One day, however, he made up his mind to know the truth of the matter, and to revenge himself if he could on the person who put this affront upon him. With this view he pretended to go for two or three days to a place at some little distance; and no sooner had he taken his departure, than his wife sent for her gallant. They had hardly been half an hour together when the husband came and knocked loudly at the door. The wife knowing but too well who it was, told her lover, who was so astounded that he could have wished he was still in his mother's womb. But while he was swearing and confounding her and the intrigue which had brought him into such a perilous scrape, she told him not to be uneasy, for she would get him off without its costing him anything; and that all he had to do was to dress himself as quickly as possible.

Meanwhile the husband kept knocking and calling to his wife as loud as he could bawl, but she pretended not to know him. "Why don't you get up," she cried to the people of the house, "and go and silence those who are making such a noise at the door? Is this a proper time to come to honest people's houses? If my husband was here he would make you know better." The husband, hearing her voice, shouted louder than ever. "Let me in, wife; do you mean to keep me at the door till daylight?" At last, when she saw that her lover was ready to slip out, "Oh, is that you, husband?" she said; "I am so glad you are come! I was full of a dream I had that gave me the greatest pleasure I ever felt in my life. I thought you had recovered the sight of your eye." Here she opened the door, and catching her husband round the neck, kissed him, clapped one hand on his sound eye, and asked him if he did not see better than usual. Whilst the husband was thus blindfolded the gallant made his escape. The husband guessed how it was, but said "I will watch you no more, wife. I thought to deceive you, but it is I who have been the dupe, and you have put the cunningest trick upon me that ever was invented. God

spent a whole week. One round of pleasure succeeded another, walking hunting, fishing, feasting, dancing. They never slept, but rather passed the hours of night joking and teasing one another. In short all went so smoothly, that the younger daughter began to find that their host did not have so blue a beard after all, and that he was indeed a very honest man. As soon as they returned to town, the marriage was concluded.

At the end of a month, Blue Beard told his wife that he was obliged to take a journey into the provinces, for some six weeks at least, for some business of serious consequence. He begged her to divert herself during his absence by inviting some of her friends, to take them to the country if she so desired; and above all, to make good cheer.

"Here," said he, "are the keys to the two great stores-chambers. This one opens the room of my gold and silver plate, which is but seldom used; these are the keys of my jewel coffers, and here is the master-key to all of the apartments. As for this little key, that is for the cabinet at the end of the great gallery of the ground floor apartment. Open all the doors; go everywhere, but I forbid you to enter that little cabinet. And I forbid you so strongly, that if you should open it, there is nothing you may not expect from my anger."

She promised to obey all his orders exactly; and after embracing her, he got into his coach and departed on his journey.

Her friends and kind neighbours scarcely waited for the young bride's invitation, so impatient were they to see all the riches of her home, having never dared to come while her husband was in, because of his blue beard which terrified them. They ran through the entire house, the chambers, the closets, the wardrobes, each one proving to be more beautiful than the last. They went into the store-rooms, where they could not sufficiently admire the number and beauty of the tapestries, beds, sofas, consoles, tables, and mirrors, in which one could see oneself from head to foot, with their frames of glass and silver and silver-gilt, the most magnificent ever seen. They did not cease to extol and to envy the good fortune of their friend who, meanwhile, was not in the least amused by the sight of all these riches, being impatient to open the little cabinet on the ground floor.

She was so pressed by her curiosity, that, without considering how uncivil it was to leave her guests, she ran down a back staircase with such haste that she thought she would break her neck. When she reached the door of the cabinet, she hesitated for a moment, thinking of her husband's order, and considering what ill fate might befall her if she disobeyed it. But the temptation was so powerful, that she could not overcome it. She therefore took the little key, and, trembling, opened the door.

At first she could see nothing, because the window-shutters were closed. After some moments, she began to perceive that the floor was

to come and see me today. And when you see them, beckon them to make haste."

Sister Anne ran up to the roof of the tower; and from time to time, the afflicted one cried up to her, "Anne, Sister Anne, do you see anyone coming?"

And Sister Anne answered her, "I see nothing but the noon dust a-blowing and the green grass a-growing."

Meanwhile, Blue Beard, holding a huge sabre in his hand, cried with all his might, "Come down quickly, or I will go up to you!"

"Another moment, I pray you," his wife replied. And then she called softly to her sister, "Anne, Sister Anne, do you see anyone coming?" And Sister Anne answered, "I see nothing but the noon dust a-flying and the green grass a-growing."

"Come down quickly," shouted Blue Beard, "or I will go up to you!"

"I am coming," answered his wife. And then she cried, "Anne, Sister Anne, do you see anyone coming?"

"I see," replied Sister Anne, "a great cloud of dust coming from yonder."

"Is it my brothers?"

"Alas! no, sister. I see a flock of sheep. . . ."

"Will you not come down?" shouted Blue Beard.

"Yet another moment," pleaded his wife. And again she called, "Anne, Sister Anne, do you see nobody coming?"

"I see two knights approaching, but they are yet a long way off. . . . God be praised," she cried out a moment after, "they are our brothers. I'll signal them to make haste."

Then Blue Beard began to roar so terribly that he made the whole house tremble. The poor lady came down and cast herself at his feet, all in tears and dishevelled. "This shall not help you," said Blue Beard. "You must die!" Then clutching her hair in one hand, and flourishing the sabre in the other, he was going to strike off her head. The poor lady wriggled about and looked up at him with dying eyes, imploring him to grant her just a moment to fix her thoughts on devotion.

"No, no," said he, "recommend thyself to God," and he lifted his arm. . . .

In that moment there came so loud a knocking at the gate, that Blue Beard's arm abruptly paused, midair. The gate was opened, and two cavaliers ran in with drawn swords and rushed at Blue Beard. He had recognised them as his wife's brothers,—one was a dragoon, the other a musketeer,—and he ran to save himself. But the two brothers pursued him so swiftly, that they overtook him before he could reach the perron. They passed their swords through his body, and left him there for dead. The poor lady was nearly as dead as her husband, and had not the strength to rise and embrace her brothers.

Their schooldays were drawing near their end, when a tailor one day brought Jeannot a velvet coat of three colours with a waistcoat of Lyons silk to match in excellent taste; this suit of clothes was accompanied by a letter addressed to Monsieur de la Jeannotière. Colin admired the coat, and was not at all jealous; but Jeannot assumed an air of superiority which distressed Colin. From that moment Jeannot paid no more heed to his lessons, but was always looking at his reflection in the glass, and despised everybody but himself. Some time afterwards a footman arrived post-haste, bringing a second letter, addressed this time to His Lordship the Marquis de la Jeannotière; it contained an order from his father for the young nobleman, his son, to be sent to Paris. As Jeannot mounted the chaise to drive off, he stretched out his hand to Colin with a patronising smile befitting his rank. Colin felt his own insignificance, and wept. So Jeannot departed in all his glory.

Readers who like to know all about things may be informed that Monsieur Jeannot, the father, had rapidly gained immense wealth in business. You ask how those great fortunes are made? It all depends upon luck. Monsieur Jeannotière had a comely person, and so had his wife; moreover her complexion was fresh and blooming. They had gone to Paris to prosecute a lawsuit which was ruining them, when Fortune, who lifts up and casts down human beings, at her pleasure, presented them with an introduction to the wife of an army-hospital contractor, a man of great talent, who could boast of having killed more soldiers in one year than the cannon had destroyed in ten. Jeannot took the lady's fancy, and Jeannot's wife captivated the gentleman. Jeannot soon became a partner in the business, and entered into other speculations. When one is in the current of the stream it is only necessary to let oneself drift, and so an immense fortune may sometimes be made without any trouble. The beggars who watch you from the bank, as you glide along in full sail, open their eyes in astonishment; they wonder how you have managed to get on; they envy you at all events, and write pamphlets against you which you never read. That was what happened to Jeannot senior, who was soon styled Monsieur de la Jeannotière, and, after buying a marquisate at the end of six months, he took the young nobleman his son away from school, to launch him into the fashionable world of Paris.

Colin, always affectionately disposed, wrote a kind letter to his old schoolfellow in order to offer his congratulations. The little marquis sent him no answer, which grieved Colin sorely.

The first thing that his father and mother did for the young gentleman was to get him a tutor. This tutor, who was a man of distinguished manners and profound ignorance, could teach his pupil nothing. The marquis wished his son to learn Latin, but the marchioness would not hear of it. They consulted the opinion of a certain author who had obtained considerable celebrity at that time from some popular works which he had

The marchioness, at these words, smiled graciously upon the courtly ignoramus, and said:

"It is easy to see, sir, that you are a most accomplished gentleman; my son will owe all his education to you. I imagine, however, that it will not be a bad thing for him to know a little history."

"Nay, madame—what good would that do him?" he answered. "Assuredly the only entertaining and useful history is that of the passing hour. All ancient histories, as one of our clever writers \* has observed, are admitted to be nothing but fables; and for us moderns it is an inextricable chaos. What does it matter to the young gentleman, your son, if Charlemagne instituted the twelve Paladins of France, or if his successor † had an impediment in his speech?"

"Nothing was ever said more wisely!" exclaimed the tutor. "The minds of children are smothered under a mass of useless knowledge; but of all sciences that which seems to me the most absurd, and the one best adapted to extinguish every spark of genius, is geometry. That ridiculous science is concerned with surfaces, lines, and points which have no existence in nature. In imagination a hundred thousand curved lines may be made to pass between a circle and a straight line which touches it, although in reality you could not insert so much as a straw. Geometry, indeed, is nothing more than a bad joke."

The marquis and his lady did not understand much of the meaning of what the tutor was saying; but they were quite of his way of thinking.

"A nobleman like his lordship," he continued, "should not dry up his brain with such unprofitable studies. If, some day, he should require one of those sublime geometers to draw a plan of his estates, he can have them measured for his money. If he should wish to trace out the antiquity of his lineage, which goes back to the most remote ages, all he will have to do will be to send some learned Benedictine. It is the same with all the other arts. A young lord born under a lucky star is neither a painter, nor a musician, nor an architect, nor a sculptor; but he may make all these arts flourish by encouraging them with his generous approval. Doubtless it is much better to patronise than to practise them. It will be quite enough if my lord the young marquis has taste; it is the part of artists to work for him, and thus there is a great deal of truth in the remark that people of quality (that is, if they are very rich) know everything without learning anything, because, in point of fact and in the long run, they are masters of all the knowledge which they can command and pay for."

The agreeable ignoramus then took part in the conversation, and said: "You have well remarked, madame, that the great end of man's exis-

\* Bernard Fontenelle, who died in the year 1757.—[Ed.]

† Louis le Bègue, i. e., the Stammerer, was third in succession from Charlemagne.—[Ed.]

After the son had consoled with his mother for a long time, he said at last:

"Let us not despair; this young widow loves me to distraction; she is even more generous than she is wealthy, I can assure you; I will fly to her for succour, and bring her to you."

So he returns to his mistress, and finds her conversing in private with a fascinating young officer.

"What! Is that you, my Lord de la Jeannotière? What business have you with me? How can you leave your mother by herself in this way? Go, and stay with the poor woman, and tell her that she shall always have my good wishes. I am in want of a waiting-woman now, and will gladly give her the preference."

"My lad," said the officer, "you seem pretty tall and straight; if you would like to enter my company, I will make it worth your while to enlist."

The marquis, stupefied with astonishment, and secretly enraged, went off in search of his former tutor, confided to him all his troubles, and asked his advice. He proposed that he should become, like himself, a tutor of the young.

"Alas! I know nothing; you have taught me nothing whatever, and you are the primary cause of all my unhappiness." And as he spoke he began to sob.

"Write novels," said a wit who was present; "it is an excellent resource to fall back upon at Paris."

The young man, in more desperate straits than ever, hastened to the house of his mother's father confessor; he was a Theatine \* monk of the very highest reputation, who directed the souls of none but ladies of the first rank in society. As soon as he saw him, the reverend gentleman rushed to meet him.

"Good gracious! My lord marquis, where is your carriage? How is your honoured mother, the marchioness?"

The unfortunate young fellow related the disaster that had befallen his family. As he explained the matter further the Theatine assumed a graver air, one of less concern and more self-importance.

"My son, herein you may see the hand of Providence; riches serve only to corrupt the heart. The Almighty has shown special favour then to your mother in reducing her to beggary. Yes, sir, so much the better!—she is now sure of her salvation."

"But, father, in the meantime are there no means of obtaining some succour in this world?"

"Farewell, my son! There is a lady of the Court waiting for me."

\*The Theatines are a religious brotherhood now confined to Italy, formed in 1524. Their first superior was one of the four founders of the order, Caraffa, Bishop of Theate (Chieti); hence their name.—[Ed.]



Colin's generosity developed in Jeannot's heart the germ of that good disposition which the world had not yet choked. He felt that he could not desert his father and mother.

"We will take care of your mother," said Colin; "and as for the good man your father, who is in prison—I know something of business matters—his creditors, when they see that he has nothing more, will agree to a moderate composition. I will see to all that myself."

Colin was as good as his word, and succeeded in effecting the father's release from prison. Jeannot returned to his old home with his parents, who resumed their former occupation. He married Colin's sister, who, being like her brother in disposition, rendered her husband very happy. And so Jeannot the father, and Jeannotte the mother, and Jeannot the son came to see that vanity is no true source of happiness.



## JEAN-FRANCOIS MARMONTEL

(1723-1799)

MARMONTEL was educated for the priesthood, but he grew too liberal and became a professional writer. He wrote plays, memoirs, romances, articles for the *Encyclopedia*, and a collection of *Moral Tales*, in which, by a curious paradox, the morals are frequently absent. The merit of these famous tales lies in the delicate finish of the style, as well as in the graphic pictures of French society under Louis XV. Occasionally, Marmontel conveys his readers to an Oriental scene, as happens in *Soliman II*.

The present version is from a translation of the *Moral Tales*, published in London, no date.

## SOLIMAN II

**I**T is pleasant to see grave historians racking their brains, in order to find out great causes for great events. Sylla's *valet-de-chambre* would perhaps have laughed heartily to hear the politicians reason on the abdication of his master; but it is not of Sylla that I am now going to speak.

Soliman II. married his slave in contempt of the laws of the Sultans. It is natural at first to paint to ourselves this slave as an accomplished beauty, with an elevated soul, an uncommon genius, and a profound skill in politics. No such thing; the fact was as follows:—

Soliman grew splenetic in the midst of his glory: the various but

baskets. "Do not consult me," replied the Sultan; "I hate without distinction everything that can rob me of one of your charms." Elmira blushed, and the Sultan perceiving she preferred the colours most favourable to the character of her beauty, he conceived a pleasing hope from that circumstance: for care to adorn one's self is almost a desire to please.

The month of trial passed away in timid gallantries on the part of the Sultan, and on Elmira's side in complaisance and delicate attentions. Her confidence in him increased every day without her perceiving it. At first he was not permitted to see her till after the business of the toilette and on condition to depart when she prepared to undress again. In a short time he was admitted both to her toilet and dishabillé. It was there that the plan of their amusements for that day and the next was formed. Whatever either proposed was exactly what the other was going to propose. Their disputes turned only on the stealing of thoughts. Elmira, in these disputes, perceived not some small slips which escaped her modesty. A pin misplaced, or a garter put on unthinkingly, etc., afforded the Sultan pleasures which he was cautious not to testify. He knew (and it was much for a Sultan to know) that it was impolitic to advertise modesty of the dangers to which it exposes itself; that it is never fiercer than when alarmed; and that in order to subdue it one should render them familiar. Nevertheless, the more he discovered of Elmira's charms the more he perceived his fears increase, on account of the approach of the day that might deprive him of them.

The fatal period arrives. Soliman causes chests to be prepared, filled with stuffs, precious stones, and perfumes. He repairs to Elmira, followed by these presents. "It is to-morrow," said he, "that I have promised to restore you to liberty, if you still regret the want of it. I now came to acquit myself of my promise, and to bid adieu to you for ever." "What!" said Elmira trembling, "is it to-morrow? I had forgot it." "It is to-morrow," resumed the Sultan, "that, delivered up to my despair, I am to become the most unhappy of men." "You are very cruel, then, to yourself, to put me in mind of it!" "Alas! it depends only on you, Elmira, that I should forget it for ever." "I confess," said she to him, "that your sorrow touches me; that your proceedings have interested me in your happiness; and if, to show my gratitude, it were necessary only to prolong the time of my slavery—" "No, madam, I am but too much accustomed to the happiness of possessing you. I perceive that the more I shall know of you, the more terrible it would be to me to lose you. This sacrifice will cost me my life; but I shall only render it the most grievous by deferring it. May your country prove worthy of it! May the people whom you are going to please deserve you better than I do! I ask but one favour of you, which is that you would be pleased cordially to accept these presents, as the feeble pledges of a love the most pure and tender that yourself, yes, that yourself, are capable of inspiring." "No," said she

pressed with jealousy, she was scarce able to breathe. "How happy is Delia," said she in a low voice to Soliman, "to have so tuneful a voice! Alas! it ought to be the organ of my heart! everything that she expresses, you have taught me to feel." So said Elmira, but Soliman did not listen to her.

Delia changed her tone a second time to inconstancy. All that the changeful variety of nature contains, either interesting or amiable, was recapitulated in her song. It seemed like the fluttering of the butterfly over roses, or like the zephyrs losing themselves among the flowers. "Listen to the turtle," said Delia; "she is faithful but melancholy. See the inconstant sparrow. Pleasure moves his wings; his warbling voice is exerted merely to return thanks to love. Water freezes only in stagnation; a heart never languishes but in constancy. There is but one mortal on earth whom it is possible to love always. Let him change, let him enjoy the advantage of making a thousand hearts happy; all prevent his wishes, or pursue him. They adore him in their own arms; they love him even in the arms of another. Let him give himself up to our desires, or withdraw himself from them, still he will find love wherever he goes, wherever he goes will leave the print of love on his footsteps."

Elmira was no longer able to dissemble her displeasure and grief. She gets up and retires. The Sultan does not recall her; and while she is overwhelming herself with tears, repeating a thousand times, "Ah, the ungrateful! ah, the perfidious man!" Soliman, charmed with his divine songstress, prepares to realise with her some of those pictures which she had drawn so much to the life. The next morning the unhappy Elmira wrote a billet filled with reproach and tenderness, in which she puts him in mind of the promise he had made her. "That is true," said the Sultan, "let us send her back to her country, laden with marks of my favour. This poor girl loves me dearly, and I am to blame on her account."

The first moments of his love for Delia were no more than an intoxication; but as soon as he had time for reflection he perceived that she was more petulant than sensible, more greedy of pleasure than flattered in administering it—in a word, fitter than himself to have a seraglio at command. To feed his illusion, he sometimes invited Delia, that he might hear that voice which had enchanted him; but that voice was no longer the same. The impression made by it became every day weaker and weaker by habitude; and it was now no more than a slight emotion, when an unforeseen circumstance dissipated it for ever.

The chief officer of the seraglio came to inform the Sultan that it was impossible to manage the untractable vivacity of one of the European slaves, that she made a jest of his prohibitions and menaces, and that she answered him only by cutting raileries and immoderate bursts of laughter. Soliman, who was too great a prince to make a state affair of what

come to him. "You seem to me," said he, "to be but little in Roxalana's good graces; in order to make your peace, go and tell her I will come and drink tea with her." On the arrival of the officer, Roxalana's women hasten to wake her. "What does the ape want with me?" cried she, rubbing her eyes. "I come," replied the eunuch, "from the Emperor, to kiss the dust off your feet, and to inform you that he will come and drink tea with the delight of his soul." "Get away with your strange speeches! My feet have no dust, and I do not drink tea so early."

The eunuch retired without replying, and gave an account of his embassy. "She is in the right," said the Sultan; "why did you wake her? You do everything wrong." As soon as it was broad day with Roxalana, he went thither. "You are angry with me?" said he. "They have disturbed your sleep, and I am the innocent cause of it.\* Come, let us make peace; imitate me. You see that I forget all that you said to me yesterday." "You forget it! so much the worse. I said some good things to you. My frankness displeases you, I see plainly; but you will soon grow accustomed to it. And are you not too happy to find a friend in a slave? Yes, a friend who interests herself in your welfare, and who would teach you to love. Why have not you made a voyage to my country? It is there that they know love. It is there that it is lively and tender; and why? Because it is free. Sentiment is involuntary, and does not come by force. The yoke of marriage amongst us is much lighter than that of slavery; and yet a husband that is beloved is a prodigy. Everything under the name of duty saddens the soul, blasts the imagination, cools desire, and takes off that edge of self-love which gives all the relish and seasoning to affection. Now, if it be so difficult to love a husband, how much harder is it to love a master, especially if he has not the address to conceal the fetters he puts upon us!" "And I," replied the Sultan; "I will forget nothing to soften your servitude; but you ought in your turn—" "I *ought!* nothing but what one *ought!* Leave off, I prythee, now, these humiliating phrases. They come with a very ill grace from the mouth of a man of gallantry, who has the honour of talking to a pretty woman." "But, Roxalana, do you forget who I am, and who you are?" "*Who you are, and who I am?* You are powerful, I am pretty; and so we are even." "Maybe so," replied the Sultan haughtily, "in your country; but here, Roxalana, I am master, and you a slave." "Yes, I know you have purchased me; but the robber who sold me could transfer to you only those rights over me which he had himself, the rights of rapine and violence—in one word, the rights of a robber; and you are too honest a man to think of abusing them. After all, you are my master, because my life is in your hands; but I am no longer your slave, if I know how to despise life, and truly the life one leads here is not worth the fear of losing it." "What a frightful notion!" cried the Sultan; "do you take me for a barbarian? No, my dear Roxalana, I

evening. But no; order the songstress to come here. It is better to send her."

Delia was charged to employ all her art to engage the confidence of Roxalana. As soon as the latter had heard all that she had got to say—"What!" said she, "young and handsome as you are, does he charge you with his messages, and have you the weakness to obey him? Get you gone; you are not worthy to be my countrywoman! Ah! I see plainly that they spoil him, and that I alone must take upon me to teach this Turk how to live. I will send him word that I keep you to sup with me; I must have him make some atonement for his impertinence." "But, madam, he will take it ill." "He! I should be glad to see him take anything ill of me." "But he seemed desirous of seeing you alone." "Alone, ah! it is not come to that yet; and I shall make him go over a good deal of ground before we have anything particular to say to each other."

The Sultan was as much surprised as piqued to learn that they should have a third person. However, he repaired early to Roxalana's. As soon as she saw him coming, she ran to meet him with as easy an air as if they had been upon the best footing in the world together. "There," said she, "is a handsome man come to sup with us! Do you like him, madam? Confess, Soliman, that I am a good friend. Come, draw near, salute the lady. There; very well. Now, thank me. Softly; I do not like to have people dwell too long on their acknowledgments. Wonderful! I assure you he surprises me. He has had but two lessons, and see how he is improved! I do not despair of making him one day or other an absolute Frenchman."

Do but imagine the astonishment of a Sultan; a Sultan!—the conqueror of Asia!—to see himself treated like a school-boy by a slave of eighteen. During supper her gaiety and extravagance were inconceivable. The Sultan was beside himself with transport. He questioned her concerning the manners of Europe. One picture followed another. Our prejudices, our follies, our humours, were all laid hold of, all represented. Soliman thought himself in Paris. "The witty rogue!" cried he; "the witty rogue!" From Europe she fell upon Asia. This was much worse; the haughtiness of the men, the weakness of the women, the dulness of their society, nothing escaped her, though she had only seen but cursorily.

She was preparing to enlarge upon the honour that the circumstance of his reign would do him in history; but he begged her to spare him. "Well," said she, "I perceive that I take up those moments which Delia could fill up much better. Throw yourself at her feet, to obtain from her one of those airs which they say she sings with so much taste and spirit." Delia did not suffer herself to be entreated. Roxalana appeared charmed; she asked Soliman, in a low voice, for a handkerchief; he gave

to my own country, where all the handsome women are sovereigns, and much more absolutely than I should be here; for they reign over hearts." "The sovereignty of mine, then, is not sufficient for you?" said Soliman, with the most tender air in the world. "No, I desire no heart which has pleasures that I have not. Talk to me no more of your feasts, all mere pastimes for children! I must have embassies." "But, Roxalana, you are either mad or you dream!" "And what do you find, then, so extravagant, in desiring to reign with you? Am I formed to disgrace a throne? and do you think that I should have displayed less greatness and dignity than yourself in assuring our subjects and allies of our protection?" "I think," said the Sultan, "that you would do everything with grace; but it is not in my power to satisfy your ambition, and I beseech you to think no more of it." "Think no more of it! Oh! I promise you I shall think of nothing else; and I will from henceforward dream of nothing but a sceptre, a crown, an embassy." She kept her word. The next morning she had already contrived the design of her diadem, and had already settled everything, except the colour of a ribbon which was to tie it. She ordered rich stuffs to be brought her for her habits of ceremony; and as soon as the Sultan appeared, she asked his opinion on the choice. He exerted all his endeavours to divert her from this idea; but contradiction plunged her into the deepest melancholy; and to draw her out of it again he was obliged to flatter her illusion. Then she displayed the most brilliant gaiety. He seized these moments to talk to her of love; but, without listening, she talked to him of politics. All her answers to the harangues of the deputies, on her accession to the crown, were already prepared. She had even formed projects of regulations for the territories of the Grand Seigneur. She would make them plant vines and build opera houses; suppress the eunuchs because they were good for nothing; shut up the jealous because they disturbed society; and banish all self-interested persons because sooner or later they become rogues. The Sultan amused himself for some time with these follies; nevertheless he still burned with the most violent love, without any hope of being happy. On the least suspicion of violence she became furious, and was ready to kill herself. On the other hand, Soliman found not the ambition of Roxalana so very foolish—"For, in short," said he, "is it not cruel to be alone deprived of the happiness of associating to my fortune a woman whom I esteem and love? All my subjects may have a lawful wife; an absurd law forbids marriage to me alone." Thus spoke love, but policy put him to silence. He took the resolution of confiding to Roxalana the reasons which restrained him. "I would make it," said he, "my happiness to leave nothing wanting to yours; but our manners—" "Idle stories!" "Our laws—" "Old songs!" "The priests—" "What care they!" "The people and the soldiery—" "What is it to them? Will they be more wretched when you shall have me for your comfort? You have

## THE EXECUTIONER

**M**IDNIGHT had just sounded from the belfry tower of the little town of Menda. A young French officer, leaning over the parapet of the long terrace at the further end of the castle gardens, seemed to be unusually absorbed in deep thought for one who led the reckless life of a soldier; but it must be admitted that never was the hour, the scene, and the night more favourable to meditation.

The blue dome of the cloudless sky of Spain was overhead; he was looking out over the coy windings of a lovely valley lit by the uncertain starlight and the soft radiance of the moon. The officer, leaning against an orange tree in blossom, could also see, a hundred feet below him, the town of Menda, which seemed to nestle for shelter from the north wind at the foot of the crags on which the castle itself was built. He turned his head and caught sight of the sea; the moonlit waves made a broad frame of silver for the landscape.

There were lights in the castle windows. The mirth and movement of a ball, the sounds of the violins, the laughter of the officers and their partners in the dance were borne towards him and blended with the far-off murmur of the waves. The cool night had a certain bracing effect upon his frame, wearied as he had been by the heat of the day. He seemed to bathe in the air, made fragrant by the strong, sweet scent of flowers and of aromatic trees in the gardens.

The castle of Menda belonged to a Spanish grandee, who was living in it at that time with his family. All through the evening the oldest daughter of the house had watched the officer with such a wistful interest that the Spanish lady's compassionate eyes might well have set the young Frenchman dreaming. Clara was beautiful; and although she had three brothers and a sister, the broad lands of the Marqués de Légañès appeared to be sufficient warrant for Victor Marchand's belief that the young lady would have a splendid dowry. But how could he dare to imagine that the most fanatical believer in blue blood in all Spain would give his daughter to the son of a grocer in Paris? Moreover, the French were hated. It was because the Marquis had been suspected of an attempt to raise the country in favor of Ferdinand VII. that General G—, who governed the province, had stationed Victor Marchand's battalion in the little town of Menda to overawe the neighbouring districts which received the Marqués de Légañès' word as law. A recent despatch from Marshal Ney had given ground for fear that the English might ere long effect a landing on the coast, and had indicated the Marquis as being in correspondence with the Cabinet in London.

In spite, therefore, of the welcome with which the Spaniards had received Victor Marchand and his soldiers, that officer was always on his

good Christian to be lighting tapers at this time of night. Says I to myself, 'They mean to gobble us up!' and I set myself to dogging his heels; and that is how I found out that there is a pile of faggots, sir, two or three steps away from here."

Suddenly a dreadful shriek rang through the town below, and cut the man short. A light flashed in the commandant's face, and the poor grenadier dropped down with a bullet through his head. Ten paces away a bonfire flared up like a conflagration. The sounds of music and laughter ceased all at once in the ballroom; the silence of death, broken only by groans, succeeded to the rhythmical murmur of the festival. Then the roar of cannon sounded from across the white plain of the sea.

A cold sweat broke out on the young officer's forehead. He had left his sword behind. He knew that his men had been murdered, and that the English were about to land. He knew that if he lived he would be dishonoured; he saw himself summoned before a court-martial. For a moment his eyes measured the depth of the valley, the next, just as he was about to spring down, Clara's hand caught his.

"Fly!" she cried. "My brothers are coming after me to kill you. Down yonder at the foot of the cliff you will find Juanito's Andalusian. Go!"

She thrust him away. The young man gazed at her in dull bewilderment; but obeying the instinct of self-preservation, which never deserts even the bravest, he rushed across the park in the direction pointed out to him, springing from rock to rock in places unknown to any save the goats. He heard Clara calling to her brothers to pursue him; he heard the footsteps of the murderers; again and again he heard their balls whistling about his ears; but he reached the foot of the cliff, found the horse, mounted, and fled with lightning speed.

A few hours later the young officer reached General G——'s quarters, and found him at dinner with the staff.

"I put my life in your hands!" cried the haggard and exhausted commandant of Menda.

He sank into a seat, and told his horrible story. It was received with an appalling silence.

"It seems to me that you are more to be pitied than to blame," the terrible general said at last. "You are not answerable for the Spaniard's crimes, and, unless the marshall decides otherwise, I acquit you."

These words brought but cold comfort to the unfortunate officer.

"When the Emperor comes to hear about it!" he cried.

"Oh, he will be for having you shot," said the general, "but we shall see. Now we will say no more about this," he added severely, "except to plan a revenge that shall strike a salutary terror into this country, where they carry on war like savages."



"I am come in haste," he faltered out, "to ask a favour."

"*You!*" exclaimed the general, with bitter irony in his tones.

"Alas!" answered Victor, "it is a sorry favor. The Marquis has seen them erecting the gallows, and hopes that you will commute the punishment for his family; he entreats you to have the nobles beheaded."

"Granted," said the general.

"He further asks that they may be allowed the consolations of religion, and that they may be unbound; they give you their word that they will not attempt to escape."

"That I permit," said the general, "but you are answerable for them."

"The old noble offers you all that he has if you will pardon his youngest son."

"Really!" cried the commander. "His property is forfeited already to King Joseph." He paused; a contemptuous thought set wrinkles in his forehead, as he added, "I will do better than they ask. I understand what he means by that last request of his. Very good. Let him hand down his name to posterity; but whenever it is mentioned, all Spain shall remember his treason and its punishment! I will give the fortune and his life to any one of the sons who will do the executioner's office. There, don't talk any more about them to me."

Dinner was ready. The officers sat down to satisfy an appetite whetted by hunger. Only one among them was absent from the table—that one was Victor Marchand. After long hesitation, he went to the ball-room, and heard the last sighs of the proud house of Légañès. He looked adly at the scene before him. Only last night, in this very room, he had seen their faces whirl past him in the waltz, and he shuddered to think that those girlish heads with those of the three young brothers must fall in a brief space by the executioner's sword. There sat the father and mother, their three sons and two daughters, perfectly motionless, bound to their gilded chairs. Eight serving-men stood with their hands tied behind them. These fifteen prisoners, under sentence of death, exchanged grave glances; it was difficult to read the thoughts that filled them from their eyes, but profound resignation and regret that their enterprise should have failed so completely was written on more than one brow.

The impassive soldiers who guarded them respected the grief of their bitter enemies. A gleam of curiosity lighted up all faces when Victor came in. He gave orders that the condemned prisoners should be unbound, and himself unfastened the cords that held Clara a prisoner. She smiled mournfully at him. The officer could not refrain from lightly touching the young girl's arm; he could not help admiring her dark hair, her slender waist. She was a true daughter of Spain, with a Spanish complexion, a Spaniard's eyes, blacker than the raven's wing beneath their long curving lashes.

"Juanito, I command you!" said the Marquis solemnly.

The young Count gave no sign, and his father fell on his knees; Clara, Manuel, and Felipe unconsciously followed his example, stretching out suppliant hands to him who must save their family from oblivion, and seeming to echo their father's words.

"Can it be that you lack the fortitude of a Spaniard and true sensibility, my son? Do you mean to keep me on my knees? What right have you to think of your own life and of your own sufferings? Is this my son, madame?" the old Marquis added, turning to his wife.

"He will consent to it," cried the mother in agony of soul. She had seen a slight contraction of Juanito's brows which she, his mother, alone understood.

Mariquita, the second daughter, knelt, with her slender clinging arms about her mother; the hot tears fell from her eyes, and her little brother Manuel upbraided her for weeping. Just at that moment the castle chaplain came in; the whole family surrounded him and led him up to Juanito. Victor felt that he could endure the sight no longer, and with a sign to Clara he hurried from the room to make one last effort for them. He found the general in boisterous spirits; the officers were still sitting over their dinner and drinking together; the wine had loosened their tongues.

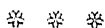
An hour later, a hundred of the principal citizens of Menda were summoned to the terrace by the general's orders to witness the execution of the family of Légeñes. A detachment had been told off to keep order among the Spanish townsfolk, who were marshalled beneath the gallows whereon the Marquis' servants hung; the feet of those martyrs of their cause all but touched the citizens' heads. Thirty paces away stood the block; the blade of a scimitar glittered upon it, and the executioner stood by in case Juanito should refuse at the last.

The deepest silence prevailed, but before long it was broken by the sound of many footsteps, the measured tramp of a picket of soldiers, and the jingling of their weapons. Mingled with these came other noises—loud talk and laughter from the dinner-table where the officers were sitting; just as the music and the sound of the dancers' feet had drowned the preparations for last night's treacherous butchery.

All eyes turned to the castle, and beheld the family of nobles coming forth with incredible composure to their death. Every brow was serene and calm. One alone among them, haggard and overcome, leaned on the arm of the priest, who poured forth all the consolations of religion for the one man who was condemned to live. Then the executioner, like the spectators, knew that Juanito had consented to perform his office for a day. The old Marquis and his wife, Clara and Mariquita, and their two brothers knelt a few paces from the fatal spot. Juanito reached it, guided by the priest. As he stood at the block, the executioner plucked

But not a man at the table, not even a subaltern, dared to empty his glass after that speech.

In spite of the respect in which all men hold the Marqués de Légañès, in spite of the title of *El Verdugo* (the executioner) conferred upon him as a patent of nobility by the King of Spain, the great noble is consumed by a gnawing grief. He lives a retired life, and seldom appears in public. The burden of his heroic crime weighs heavily upon him, and he seems to wait impatiently till the birth of a second son shall release him, and he may go to join the Shades that never cease to haunt him.



## PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

(1803-1870)

WHILE Mérimée spent a good part of his life in the government service, he, nevertheless, succeeded in writing a number of short stories which, for sheer artistry, are unsurpassed in French fiction. Mérimée possessed a style, clear and colourful, added to which was a remarkable brevity that lent his stories the sharpness of an etching. *The Taking of the Redoubt* is the best example of this quality. *Carmen* and *Colomba* are his two longer stories.

The present version is translated for this collection by Maxim Lieber.

### THE TAKING OF THE REDOUBT

**A** MILITARY friend, who died of the fever in Greece several years ago told me one day about the first action in which he had engaged. His tale so impressed me that I wrote it down from memory as soon as I had the leisure. Here it is:

I joined the regiment in the evening of the fourth of September. I found the colonel in camp. He greeted me rather roughly; but when he had read General B——'s recommendation, his manner changed and he spoke a few courteous words to me.

I was presented by him to my captain, who had just returned from a reconnaissance. This captain, with whom I scarcely had time to become acquainted, was a tall, dark man, with a harsh repellent face. He had been a private, and had won his epaulets and his cross on the battle-field. His voice, which was hoarse and feeble, contrasted singularly with his

enemy, who replied vigorously, and the redoubt of Cheverino soon disappeared beneath dense clouds of smoke.

Our regiment was almost protected from the Russian fire by a rise in the ground. Their balls, rarely aimed at us, for they preferred to fire at our gunners, passed over our heads, or, at the worst, spattered us with dirt and small stones.

As soon as the order to advance had been given, my captain looked at me with a scrutiny which compelled me to run my hand over my budding moustache twice or thrice, with all the composure at my disposal. Besides I had no fear, and the only dread I suffered was that he should believe that I was frightened. Those harmless cannon-balls contributed to maintain my heroic calm. My self-esteem told me that I was really in danger, as I was at last under the fire of a battery. I was overjoyed to be so entirely at my ease, and I thought of the pleasure of relating the capture of the redoubt of Cheverino in Madame de B——'s salon on Rue de Provence.

The colonel passed our company; he spoke to me: "Well, you are going to see some sharp work for your début."

I smiled with quite a martial air while brushing my coat-sleeve, on which a shot, that struck the ground thirty paces away, had spattered a little dust.

It seems that the Russians perceived the ill success of their cannon-balls; for they replaced them with shells, which could more easily reach us in the hollow where we were posted. A large piece of one took off my shako and killed a man near me.

"I congratulate you," said my captain, as I picked up my shako; "you're safe now for to-day."

I was acquainted with the military superstition which believes that the axiom, *Non bis in idem*, has the same application on a field of battle as in a court of justice. I proudly replaced my shako.

"That is making a fellow salute rather unceremoniously," I said as gaily as I could. That wretched joke was considered first-rate, in view of the circumstances.

"I congratulate you," resumed the captain; "you will get nothing worse, and you will command a company this evening; for I feel that the oven is being heated for me. Every time that I have been wounded the officer nearest me has been hit by a spent ball; and," he added in a low and shameful tone, "their names always began with a P."

I feigned incredulity; many men would have done the same; many men too would have been, as I was, profoundly impressed by those prophetic words. Conscript as I was, I felt that I could not confide my sensations to any one, and that I must always appear cool and intrepid.

After about half an hour the Russian fire sensibly diminished; thereupon we emerged from our shelter to march upon the redoubt.

the survivors. I have a very dim remembrance of what followed. We entered the redoubt; I don't know how. We fought hand to hand, amid smoke so dense that we could not see one another. I believe that I struck, for my sabre was all bloody. At last I heard shouts of "Victory!" and, the smoke growing less dense, I saw blood and corpses completely covering the surface of the redoubt. The guns especially were buried beneath piles of bodies. About two hundred men, in the French uniform, were standing about in groups, with no pretence of order, some loading their muskets, others wiping their bayonets. Eleven hundred Russian prisoners were with them.

The colonel, covered with blood, was lying on a shattered caisson near the ravine. A number of soldiers were bustling about him. I approached. "Where is the senior captain?" he asked a sergeant.

The sergeant shrugged his shoulders most expressively.

"And the senior lieutenant?"

"Monsieur here, who arrived last night," said the sergeant, in a matter-of-fact tone.

The colonel smiled bitterly.

"Well, monsieur," he said, "you command in chief; order the entrance to the redoubt to be strengthened with these waggons, for the enemy is in force; but General C—— will see that you are supported."

"Colonel," I said, "are you severely wounded?"

"Finished, my boy, but the redoubt is taken!"



## THÉOPHILE GAUTIER

(1811-1872)

GAUTIER'S early training was in the direction of painting, an influence which he carried into literature. Harassed by financial troubles, he used to grind out literary and dramatic criticisms. He wrote vividly, colourfully, in a flawless style, though his work lacks any profundity. His famous collection of poetry, *Émaux et Camées*, displaying a jewelled perfection, made him the leader of the Parnassians, the new school of poetry. It was not his poetry, but rather his famous *Mlle. de Maupin*, which established his reputation on an imperishable basis. He also wrote a number of short stories, among which we find, *Omphale: A Roman Story*. These have a brilliant literary quality that is equalled only by Mérimée.

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of-pearl. A wreath of ornamental roses coquettishly twined around a Venetian glass. Above the door the Four Seasons were painted in cameo. A fair lady with thickly powdered hair, a sky-blue corset, and an array of ribbons of the same hue, who had a bow in her right hand, a partridge in her left, a crescent upon her forehead, and a leverette at her feet, strutted and smiled with ineffable graciousness from within a large oval frame. This was one of my uncle's mistresses of old, whom he had had painted as Diana. It will scarcely be necessary to observe that the furniture itself was not of the most modern style. There was, in fact, nothing to prevent one from fancying himself living at the time of the Regency, and the mythological tapestry with which the walls were hung rendered the illusion complete.

The tapestry represented Hercules spinning at the feet of Omphale. The design was tormented after the fashion of Vanloo, and in the most Pompadour style possible to imagine. Hercules had a spindle decorated with rose-coloured favours. He elevated his little finger with a peculiar and special grace, like a marquis in the act of taking a pinch of snuff, while turning a white flake of flax between his thumb and index finger. His muscular neck was burdened with bows of ribbons, rosettes, strings of pearls, and a thousand other feminine gew-gaws, and a large *gorge-de-pigeon* coloured petticoat, with two very large panniers, lent quite a gallant air to the monster-conquering hero.

Omphale's white shoulders were half covered by the skin of the Nemean lion. Her slender hand leaned upon her lover's knotty club. Her lovely blonde hair, powdered to ash-colour, fell loosely over her neck—a neck as supple and undulating in its outlines as the neck of a dove. Her little feet, true realisations of the typical Andalusian or Chinese foot, and which would have been lost in Cinderella's glass slippers, were shod with half-antique buskins of a tender lilac colour, sprinkled with pearls. In truth, she was a charming creature. Her head was thrown back with an adorable little mock swagger, her dimpled mouth wore a delicious little pout, her nostrils were slightly expanded, her cheeks had a delicate glow—an *assassin* \* cunningly placed there relieved their beauty in a wonderful way; she only needed a little moustache to make her a first-class mousquetaire.

There were many other personages also represented in the tapestry—the kindly female attendant, the indispensable little Cupid—but they did not leave a sufficiently distinct outline in my memory to enable me to describe them.

In those days I was quite young—not that I wish to be understood as saying that I am now very old; but I was fresh from college, and was to remain in my uncle's care until I could choose a profession. If the good man had been able to foresee that I should embrace that of a fan-

\* Beauty-spot.

ately mine was fifty-seven years of age, and had only three teeth, rich was too much of one thing and too little of the other.

One evening, however, I finally plucked up courage enough to take a peep at the fair mistress of Hercules. She was looking at me with the blindest and most languishing expression possible. This time I pulled my nightcap down to my very shoulders, and buried my head in the coverlets.

I had a strange dream that night, if indeed it was a dream.

I heard the rings of my bed-curtains sliding with a sharp squeak upon their curtain-rods, as if the curtains had been suddenly pulled back. I awoke, at least in my dream it seemed to me that I awoke. I saw no one.

The moon shone full upon the window-panes, and projected her wanish light into the room. Vast shadows, fantastic forms, were defined on the floor and the walls. The clock chimed a quarter, and the vibration of the sound took a long time to die away. It seemed like a sigh. The plainly audible strokes of the pendulum seemed like the pulsations of a young heart, throbbing with passion.

I felt anything but comfortable, and a very bewilderment of fear took possession of me.

A furious gust of wind banged the shutters and made the window-panes tremble. The woodwork cracked, the tapestry undulated. I ventured a glance in the direction of Omphale, with a vague suspicion that she was instrumental in all this unpleasantness, for some secret purpose of her own. I was not mistaken.

The tapestry became violently agitated. Omphale detached herself from the wall and leaped lightly to the carpet. She came straight toward my bed, after having first turned herself carefully in my direction. I say it will hardly be necessary to describe my stupefaction. The most timid old soldier would not have felt very comfortable under similar circumstances, and I was neither old nor a soldier. I awaited the end of my adventure in terrified silence.

A flute-toned, pearly little voice sounded softly in my ears, with that airy lisp affected during the Regency by marchionesses and people of high degree:

"Do I really frighten you, my child? It is true that you are only a child, but it is not nice to be afraid of ladies, especially when they are young ladies and only wish you well. It is uncivil and unworthy of a French gentleman. You must be cured of such silly fears. Come, little child, leave off these foolish airs, and cease hiding your head under the cover-clothes. Your education is by no means complete yet, my pretty page, you have not learned so very much. In my time cherubs were more courageous."

"But, lady, it is because——"

"Because it seems strange to you to find me here instead of there," she said, biting her ruddy lip with her white teeth, and pointing toward

place on the wall, walking backward, for fear that I should see her reverse side, doubtless.

It was Baptiste, who came to brush my clothes.

"You ought not to sleep with your bed-curtains open, sir," he remarked. "You might catch a bad cold. This room is so chilly."

The curtains were actually open, and as I had been under the impression that I was only dreaming, I felt very much astonished, for I was certain that they had been closed when I went to bed.

As soon as Baptiste left the room, I ran to the tapestry. I felt it all over. It was indeed a real woollen tapestry, rough to the touch like any other tapestry. Omphale resembled the charming phantom of the night only as a dead body resembles a living one. I lifted the hangings. The wall was solid throughout. There were no masked panels or secret doors. I only noticed that a few threads were broken in the groundwork of the tapestry where the feet of Omphale rested. This afforded me food for reflection.

All that day I remained buried in the deepest brown study imaginable. I longed for evening with a mingled feeling of anxiety and impatience. I retired early, resolved on learning how this mystery was going to end. I got into bed. The marchioness did not keep me waiting long. She leaped down from the tapestry in front of the pier-glass, and dropped right by my bed. She seated herself by my pillow, and the conversation commenced.

I asked her questions as I had done the evening before, and demanded explanations. She eluded the former, and replied in an evasive manner to the latter, yet always after so witty a fashion that within a quarter of an hour I felt no scruples whatever in regard to my liaison with her.

While conversing she passed her fingers through my hair, tapped me gently on the cheeks, and softly kissed my forehead.

She chatted and chatted in a pretty mocking way, in a style at once elegantly polished and yet familiar and altogether like a great lady, such as I have never since heard from the lips of any human being.

She was then seated upon the easy-chair beside the bed. In a little while she slipped one of her arms around my neck, and I felt her heart beating passionately against me. It was indeed a charming and handsome real woman, a veritable marchioness whom I found beside me, poor student of seventeen! There was more than enough to make one lose his head, so I lost mine. I did not know very well what was going to happen, but I felt a vague presentiment that it would displease the marquis.

"And Monsieur le Marquis, on the wall up there—what will he say?"

The lion's skin had fallen to the floor, and the soft lilac-coloured buskins, filigreed with silver, were lying beside my shoes.

"He will not say anything," replied the marchioness, laughing heartily.

"Do you suppose he ever sees anything? Besides, even should he see,



It was indeed she! I fancied that her mouth smiled graciously at me, and that her eye lighted up on meeting mine.

"How much do you ask?"

"Well, I could not possibly let you have it for any less than five hundred francs."

"I have not that much with me now. I will get it and be back in an hour."

I returned with the money, but the tapestry was no longer there. An Englishman had bargained for it during my absence, offered six hundred francs for it, and taken it away with him.

After all, perhaps it was best that it should have been thus, and that I should preserve this delicious souvenir intact. They say one should never return to a first love, or look at the rose which one admired the evening before.

And then I am no longer so young or so pretty that tapestries should come down from their walls to honour me.

\* \* \*

## VILLIERS DE L'ISLE ADAM

(1838-1889)

VILLIERS DE L'ISLE ADAM, born in Brittany, may be said to have inaugurated the Symbolist movement in French literature. He wrote several plays, novels, and, in 1883, a series of stories called the *Contes Cruels*, which contains his best work. In these stories "may be found every classic quality of the French *conte*, together with many of the qualities of Edgar Allan Poe and Ernest Hoffman," says Arthur Symonds. *The Heroism of Doctor Hallidonhill* is one of the stories that appears in the fantastic *Contes Cruels*.

The present version, translated by E. O'Neil, is reprinted from *The Pagan* magazine, by permission of the editor.

### THE HEROISM OF DOCTOR HALLIDONHILL

To kill in order to cure!

*Official adage of Broussais*

**T**HE unusual case of Doctor Hallidonhill will shortly come before the London Assizes. Here are the facts:

The twentieth of last May, the two vast ante-chambers of the illustrious specialist, the healer quand-même of all affections of the lungs, overflowed with clients, as was habitually the case,—their appointment-cards in their hands.

every other day. And water-cress, water-cress, water-cress! . . . ground, pounded in its juice . . . only chance . . . and even then!—This pretended cure, with which they besiege my ears, appears to me more than absurd. I offer it to a desperate man, but without believing in it for a second. Well everything is possible . . . Next!”

The tubercular Crœsus, once delicately placed in the canopied enclosure of the elevator, the usual procession of consumptive, scorbutic, and bronchial patients began.

Six months later, the third of November, nine o'clock was striking, when a species of giant with a formidable and joyous voice, the timbre of which made the panes of glass in the office vibrate, and the leaves of the tropical plants tremble, a chubby-checked colossus, in rich furs, having hurled himself like a human bomb through the lamentable ranks of the clientele of Doctor Hallidonhill, penetrated, without appointment-card, into the sanctum of the Prince of Science, who, cold, in his black suit, had just seated himself as usual in front of his table. Seizing his body in his arms, he lifted him like a feather, and bathing,—in silence,—the withered and sallow cheeks of the practitioner with tender tears, kissed them, and kissed them again, in a sonorous fashion, in the manner of a paradoxical Norman nurse . . . then replaced him, half in a coma, and almost suffocated, in his green arm-chair.

“Two millions? Do you want them? Do you want three?” vociferated the giant, a terrible and living advertisement. “I owe to you the breath of life, the sun, good meals, the unbounded passions, existence, everything! Claim, therefore, from me unheard-of remuneration! I have a thirst for making recompense!”

“Well! really, who is this madman? . . . Have him put out!” . . . feebly articulated the doctor after a moment's prostration. “But no, but no!”, scolded the giant, with the look of a boxer, which made the attendant draw back. “In reality, I understand that you, even you, my aviator, do not recognise me. I am the man of the water-cress! The skeleton that was done-for, lost! Nice! water-cress, water-cress, water-cress! . . . I have finished my semester, and here is what you have accomplished. Look here; listen to this!”

And he beat upon his thorax with fists capable of breaking the skulls of prime Middlesex bulls.

“Hein!” cried the doctor, leaping to his feet,—“you are . . . what! This is the moribund who . . .”

“Yes, a thousand times yes, it is I!” shouted the giant:—“Since last evening, scarcely had I left the steamer, when I ordered your statue in bronze, and I will know how to manage to have some funeral ground bestowed on you at Westminster!”

Letting himself fall upon a vast sofa, the spring of which creaked and groaned: “—Ah, but life is good!” he sighed with the beatific smile

## ALPHONSE DAUDET

(1840-1897)

DAUDET, born at Nîmes, suffered a depressing boyhood. In 1857 he came to Paris to try his hand at literature, and, in the following year, he published a collection of poems which, consequently, led to his appointment on the staff of the *Figaro*. This started him on the road to success, and he subsequently published a number of novels and short stories. *Fromont Junior and Risler Senior* is the novel that established Daudet's fame. The *Tartarin* trilogy, now accepted as little classics, followed and increased his popularity. Daudet has been compared to Dickens for his pathos, humour and sympathy with the downtrodden.

*The Ensign* is from a volume, *In the Midst of Paris*, translated by Céline Bertault, published by Platt, Bruce & Co. Copyright, 1895.

## THE ENSIGN

THE regiment was engaged on the banks of a railway, and served as a target to the whole Prussian army massed in an opposite wood. They were firing on each other at a distance of eighty yards. The officers shouted, "Lie down!" but no one would obey, and the proud regiment remained standing gathered round their colours. In the great horizon of the setting sun, of cornfields, of pasture land, this confused group of men, enveloped in smoke, were like a flock of sheep surprised in the open country by the first whirlwind of a terrific storm.

It rained iron on that slope! Nothing was heard but the crackle of the volleys and the prolonged vibration of the balls which flew from one end of the battle-field to the other. From time to time the flag, which waved overhead in the wind of the mitrailleuse, disappeared in the smoke, then a voice grave and steady, dominating the firing, the struggles of the dying, the oaths of the wounded, would cry: "*Au drapeau, mes enfants, au drapeau!*" Instantly an officer, vague as a shadow in the red mist, would spring forward, and the standard, once more alive as it were, showed again above the battle.

Twenty-two times it fell. Twenty-two times its staff, still warm, slipping from a dying hand, was seized and upheld, and when, at sunset, what remained of the regiment—scarce a handful of men—retreated slowly firing as they went, the colours were mere rags in the hands of Sergeant Hornus, the twenty-third ensign of the day.

Sergeant Hornus was a crusty old war-dog, who could hardly write his own name, and who had taken twenty years to gain his sergeant's stripes. All the miseries of a foundling, all the brutalising effects of barrack-life,

marshal's order had just been read to 150,000 fighting men, well armed and efficient—an order which surrendered them to the enemy without a struggle!

"And the colours?" asked Hornus, growing pale. The colours were to be given up with the rest, with the arms, with what was left of the munitions of war—everything.

"*To-To-Tonnerre de Dieu!*" stuttered the poor man. "They shan't have mine." And he started at a run towards the town.

Here also there was great disturbance: National Guards, civilians, gendarmes shouting and excited, deputations on their way to the Marshal; but of all this Hornus saw and heard nothing. All the way up the Rue du Faubourg he kept saying to himself:

"Take my flag from me indeed! It is not possible. They have no right to it! Let him give the Prussians what is his own, his gilded carriages, his fine plate brought from Mexico! But that, it is mine. It is my honour. I defy any one to touch it."

These fragments of speech were broken by his rapid pace and by his stammer, but the old fellow had his idea notwithstanding; a very clear and defined idea—to get the standard, carry it to the regiment, and cut his way through the Prussians with all who would follow him.

When he reached his destination he was not even allowed to enter the house. The colonel, furious himself, would see no one; but Hornus was not to be put off thus. He swore, shouted, hustled the orderly!

"My flag, I want my flag." At last a window opened.

"Is it you, Hornus?"

"Yes, Colonel; I——"

"The colours are all at the arsenal—you have only to go there and you will get an acknowledgment."

"An acknowledgment! What for?"

"It is the Marshal's order."

"But Colonel——"

"Leave me alone," and the window was shut.

Old Hornus staggered like a drunken man.

"An acknowledgment, an acknowledgment," he repeated mechanically, moving slowly away, comprehending only one thing, that the flag was at the arsenal, and that he must get it again, no matter at what price.

The gates of the arsenal were wide open, to allow the passage of the Prussian waggons which were drawn up in the yard. Hornus shuddered. All the other ensigns were there, fifty or sixty officers silent and sorrowful; those sombre carts in the rain, with the men grouped bareheaded behind them, had all the aspect of a funeral.

In a corner the colours of Bazaine's army lay in a confused heap on the muddy pavement. Nothing could be sadder than these bits of gay-

## THE MAID OF THE DAUBER

SHE is still in bed, half nude, smiling, her head sunk in the pillow and her eyes heavy with sleep. One of her arms is hidden in her hair, and the other dangles over the edge of the bed. The count, in his slippers, stands before one of the windows and pulls up the shade. He is smoking a cigar and seems absorbed in thought.

You all know her. She was twenty yesterday, but looks barely sixteen. She wears the most magnificent crown that heaven has ever granted to one of its angels, a crown of brown gold, soft and strong as a horse's mane, glossy as a skein of silk. The curling flame rolls, all about her neck. Each wisp straightens itself and then runs out very long. The curls fall, the tresses slide and roll; the entire mass glows resplendent. And under the burning mass, in the midst of its splendour, appears the nape of a white and delicate neck, creamy shoulders and full breasts. Irresistible seduction dwells on that snowy throat, peeping out discreetly from beneath the fiery red hair. Passion kindles and burns when your eyes explore that neck of tender lights and golden shadows. Here mingle wild beast and the child, boldness and innocence, intoxication invoking ardent kisses.

Is she beautiful? It is hard to say; her face is hidden by masses of hair. She must have a low forehead; greyish eyes, narrow and long. Her nose is doubtless irregular, capricious; her mouth somewhat large with rosy lips.

What matter for the rest? You could not analyse her features or determine the contour of her face. She intoxicates you at first sight, as a strong wine does at the first glass. All you see is a whiteness amidst a red flame, a rosy smile; and her eyes are like the flash of silver in the sunlight. She turns your head and you are already too captivated to study her perfections one by one. She is of medium height—a little slow and heavy in her movements. Her hands and feet are those of a little girl. Her whole body expresses indolent voluptuousness. One of her bare arms, rounded and dazzling, provokes a thrill of desire. She is queen of May evenings, queen of loves that last but for a day.

She reclines on her left arm, which is slightly bent. Presently she will rise. Meanwhile she half opens her eyelids to accustom them to the daylight, and looks at the pale blue bed-curtains.

She lies lost in the lace of her pillows. She seems engulfed in perspiration and the delicious lassitude of awakening. Her body is stretched out, white and motionless, barely stirring with gentle breathing. Rosy flesh appears here and there, where the batiste nightgown opens. Nothing could be more luxurious than this bed and the woman lying upon it. The divine swan has a nest worthy of her.

whiteness of the pillow, he grows absorbed in thought of this woman. Then two ideas unite: he thinks of the woman and of the chamber synchronously. In his fancy he compares the woman and the furniture, the draperies and the carpet. Everything is in harmony.

Here the count's reverie strays, and by one of those inexplicable mysteries of human thought, his boots claim his attention. Suggested by nothing, the idea of boots suddenly invades his whole mind. He recalls that for about three months every morning when he has left this room he has found his boots cleaned and brilliantly polished. He ruminates over this recollection.

The chamber is magnificent. The woman simply divine. The count glances again at the sky-blue curtains and the single golden hair on the sheet. He compliments himself, declaring that he repaired an error of Providence when he clad in satin this queen of grace, whom destiny caused to be born to a sewer-cleaner and a concierge near Fontainebleau. He praises himself for having given a soft nest to this marvel for the insignificant sum of five or six hundred thousand francs. He rises and takes a few steps forward. He is alone. He recalls that he has been left alone thus every morning for a full quarter of an hour. And then, without curiosity, merely to be doing something, he opens the door and disappears in his turn.

The count passes through a long suite of rooms, without encountering anybody. But returning, he hears in a closet a violent and continued sound of brushing. Thinking that it is a servant, and wishing to question her as to her mistress' absence, he opens the door and puts his head in. And he stops on the threshold, gaping, stupefied.

The closet is small, painted yellow, with a brown base the height of a man. In one corner there is a pail and a large sponge, in another a broom and a duster. A bay-window throws an imperfect light on the bareness of this store-room, very high and narrow. The air is damp and chilly.

In the centre, on a door-mat, with her feet tucked under her, sits the beauty with golden hair. On her right is a pot of boot-blackening, with a brush blackened from use, still thick and damp. On her left is a boot, shining like a mirror, masterpiece of the bootblack's art. About her are spattered dabs of dirt and a fine grey dust. A little further off lies the knife used to scrape the mud off the soles. She is holding the other boot on her hand. One of her arms is quite lost in its interior. Her little fingers clutch an enormous brush with long, stiff bristles, and she is scrubbing furiously at the heel, which refuses to shine.

She has swathed her laces about her legs which she holds apart. Drops of perspiration roll down her cheeks and shoulders; and now and then she must stop to impatiently thrust back her tresses, which fall over

## THE LOST STARS

**M**ONSIEUR," said my *valet de chambre*, just as I was completing the fifth verse of a sonnet, "there are two angels without who wish to speak with Monsieur."

"Have they given you their cards?" I asked.

"I have them here, Monsieur."

On one I read "Helial," on the other "Japhael." Two angels without question!

"Ask them to enter," I said.

It was not without pleasure that I received these visitors of quality. They were clad in large wings, each made of seven plumes, on which scintillated through a soft down, light as the mist of an early morning, the seven colors of the rainbow. What one could see of their bodies resembled transparent snow faintly tinged with pink. I begged them, with a wave of the hand, to be seated, and inquired politely the motive which gave me the honour of their acquaintance.

"We will be brief," said Helial. "Sixteen years ago, one beautiful night in July, we were playing at billiards, Japhael and myself, on the green carpet of the sky."

"Pardon," I interrupted, "I thought the sky was blue!"

"It is blue in certain parts of its immensity; but in others, particularly in those which border upon the towns and the open country of Persia, it is of a green most agreeable to the eye."

I did not reply.

Helial continued:

"We had for balls, stars, the most beautiful we could find."

"And for cues?" I inquired.

"The tails (queues) of comets. Naturally, the game was most interesting. I was on the point of winning, when with a violent stroke I sent two balls over the edge."

"Over the edge?"

"Yes, of the horizon. It was a sad misfortune, for you can well understand that two stars less in heaven is a matter of grave importance. We were warned by the ruler of the heavens that we would no more be permitted to participate in the joys of paradise until we had recovered and put back into place the two lost stars.

"You can imagine the search we have made these sixteen years, up and down the earth, where to all appearance the stars had fallen. But all our quests have, alas, been in vain.

"We were going to resign ourselves to eternal exile, when we heard of the incomparable eyes of a young girl, who is your sweetheart, if one can believe rumours which are abroad. Everything seemed to indicate

The present version is translated by Sylvia Eldridge. It appeared originally in *The Pagan* magazine, and is here reprinted by permission of the editor.

## CONSTANT GUINARD

*A l'action! au mal! le bien reste ignoré . . . .*  
A. DE MUSSET.

THE couple Guinard, having married for love, passionately desired a son; and this longed-for little being, wishing to hasten the realization of their yearning, came into the world before his time. His mother died; and his father, unable to bear the grief, hung himself . . .

Constant Guinard's childhood was exemplary, but unfortunate. At school he was frequently punished, though undeservedly, and was given extra tasks to do; also was he the recipient of blows intended for other boys, and fell ill on test-days. He finished his studies with the reputation of being a hypocrite and a dunce.

At the examination for his Bachelor's Degree, he wrote the Latin version for his neighbour, which was accepted, while he was expelled for having copied.

Such unlucky débuts in life would have rendered an ordinary person ill-natured, but Constant Guinard had a noble soul, and being persuaded that happiness is the reward of virtue, he resolved to conquer ill-fortune through heroism.

The business-house where he was employed took fire one morning. When he saw the disconsolate look on the face of his employer, he threw himself into the flames in order to save the valuables in the safe. His hair was singed and his arms and hands burned, but he succeeded, at the risk of his life, in breaking the box and taking out all the valuables.

Suddenly he felt himself being dragged out. Two policemen were pulling him by the collar.

A month later he was condemned to five years' imprisonment for having tried to appropriate the contents of the safe.

A revolt took place in the prison, and wishing to rescue one of the attacked keepers, he unwittingly tripped the latter, who fell, and was killed by the rebels.

Without more ado, Constant Guinard was sent to the dungeon of Dayenne. Strengthened by his innocence, however, he escaped, and returned to France under a different name. Thinking he had outwitted fate, he once more began his good deeds.

One day, at a fair, he saw a runaway horse dragging a carriage which was about to fall into a ditch. Incontinently he throws himself in



his escape from Cayenne, his return to France under a different name. . . .

From that moment on, the orator ascended to the pinnacle of judiciary eloquence. He stigmatised the accused as a hypocrite of goodness, a corruptor of honest homes, who in order to gratify his passions, sent the husband to the wine-shops to squander money, . . . a false benefactor who, by means of presents, gained low-brow notoriety, . . . a monster disguised in the mantle of philanthropy.

He analysed with horror the refined perversity of the rogue, who welcomed mad dogs only to let them loose on people; a Satan who, loving evil for the sake of evil, risked crippling himself by stopping a runaway horse,—what for? Only to experience the appalling joy of letting the beast break into the crowd to crush old men, women, and little children.

Ah, such a creature was capable of anything! Without a shadow of doubt he had committed many other crimes of which we would never know. There were a thousand and one reasons for believing that he was the accomplice in that commission to betray France; and as for the orphan whom he had raised, and who was found killed one morning at his door, who other but himself could have assassinated her? That murder was certainly the bloody epilogue to one of those infamous dramas of shame, debauchery, and vileness that one dares hardly speak of.

After so many transgressions, there was no need of dwelling upon the last crime. Here, despite the impudent denials of the accused, there was absolute evidence. And he should be sentenced to the fullest extent of the law. Thus, he would be punished justly and not too severely. For he was not merely an ordinary criminal but a veritable demon of crime; one of those monsters of malice and hypocrisy who make us almost doubt virtue and become despairing of humanity.

Before such a requisition, the lawyer of Constant Guinard had no alternative to plead insanity for his client. He did his best . . . spoke of pathologic cases, expounded learnedly on the "nervous disturbances of criminals," presented his client as an irresponsible monomaniac, a sort of unconscious automaton, and concluded by saying that such anomalies are treated at Charenton \* rather than in prison.

Constant Guinard was unanimously condemned to death.

Virtuous men, rendered ferocious by the hatred of this crime, were transported with joy, and cried bravo! bravo! bravo!

The death of Constant Guinard was like his childhood, exemplary but unfortunate. He ascended the scaffold without fear and without pose, his face as peaceful as his conscience, with the serenity of a martyr,—which everyone mistook for a brute's unconcern.

At the supreme moment, knowing that the hangman was poor and the father of a family, he whispered softly that he had left him all his

\* Hospital for insane.

## THE DOWRY

**N**OBODY was surprised by the marriage of Maître Simon Lebrument and Mademoiselle Jeanne Cordier. Maître Lebrument had just purchased the notary-practice of Maître Papillon:—of course a good deal of money had to be paid for it; and Mademoiselle Jeanne had three hundred thousand francs ready cash,—in bank notes and money at call.

Maître Lebrument was a handsome young man, who had style,—a notarial style, a provincial style,—but anyhow style, and style was a rare thing at Boutigny-le-Rebours.

Mademoiselle Cordier had natural grace and a fresh complexion;—her grace may have been a little marred by awkwardness of manner, and her complexion was not set off to advantage by her style of dressing; but for all that she was a fine girl, well worth wooing and winning.

The wedding turned all Boutigny topsy-turvy.

The married pair, who found themselves the subject of much admiration, returned to the conjugal domicile to hide their happiness,—having resolved to make only a little trip to Paris, after first passing a few days together at home. . . .

At the end of four days, Madame Lebrument simply worshipped her husband. She could not exist a single moment without him; she had to have him all day near her to pet him, to kiss him, to play with his hands, his beard, his nose, etc. Sitting on his lap, she would take him by both ears and say: "Open your mouth and shut your eyes!" Then he would open his lips with confidence, half close his eyes, and receive a very tender and very long kiss, that would make a sort of electrical shiver run down his back. And he, for his part, did not have caresses enough, lips enough, hands enough—did not have enough of himself, in short, to adore his wife with from morning till evening and from evening until morning.

\* \* \* \* \*

After the first week passed, he said to his young companion:

"If you like, we'll start for Paris next Tuesday. We'll do like lovers before they get married:—we'll go to the restaurants, the theatres, the concert halls, everywhere, everywhere."

She jumped for joy.

"Oh! yes,—oh! yes; let us go just as soon as possible!"

He continued:

"And then, as we must not forget anything, tell your father in advance to have your dowry all ready;—I will take it with us, and while I have the chance to see Maître Papillon, I might as well pay him."

"I'll tell him first thing to-morrow morning."

The ponderous vehicle paused. And the young notary, pushing his wife before him, said to her in a very quick tone:

"Get inside! I'm going on top to smoke a cigarette before breakfast."

She did not have time to answer. The conductor, who had already caught her by the arm in order to help her up the step, almost pitched her into the vehicle: and she fell bewildered upon a bench, looking through the rear window, with stupefaction, at the feet of her husband ascending to the top of the conveyance.

And she sat there motionless between a big fat man who stunk of tobacco, and an old woman who smelled of dog.

All the other passengers, sitting dumbly in line—(a grocery boy; a working woman;—an infantry sergeant;—a gold-spectacled gentleman, wearing a silk hat with an enormous brim, turned up at each side like a gutter-pipe;—two ladies with a great air of self-importance and a snappy manner, whose very look seemed to say, "We are here; but we do not put ourselves on any level with this crowd!"—two good Sisters;—a girl with long hair; and an undertaker)—all had the look of a lot of caricatures, a museum of grotesques, a series of ludicrous cartoons of the human faces—like those rows of absurd puppets at fairs, which people knock down with balls.

The jolts of the vehicle made all their heads sway, shook them, made the flaccid skin of their cheeks shake, and as the noise of the wheels gradually stupefied them, they seemed so many sleeping idiots.

The young wife remained there, inert:

"Why did he not come in with me?" she kept asking herself. A vague sadness oppressed her. Surely he might very well have afforded to deny himself that one cigarette!

The two good Sisters signed to the driver to stop, and got out, one after the other. The omnibus went on, and stopped again. And a cook came in, all red-faced and out of breath. She sat down, and put her market basket on her knees. A strong odour of dishwater filled the omnibus.

"Why, it is much further away than I thought," said Jeanne to herself.

The undertaker got out, and was succeeded by a coachman who smelled of stables. The long-haired girl had for successor a messenger whose feet exhaled an odour of perspiration. The notary's wife felt ill-at-ease, sick, ready to cry without knowing why.

Other persons got out; others got in. The omnibus still rolled on through interminable streets, stopping at stations, and proceeding again on its way.

"How far it is!" said Jeanne to herself. "Suppose that he forgot or went to sleep! He was very tired anyhow. . . ."

The driver responded in a mischievous tone:

"It's a lady whose husband gave her the slip on the trip."

The other replied:

"Well, that has nothing to do with you—you just mind your own business!"

And he turned on his heel.

Then she began to walk straight ahead,—too much bewildered and terrified to even comprehend what had happened to her. Where was she to go? What was she to do? What on earth could have happened to him? How could he have made such a mistake?—how could he have so ill-treated her?—how could he have been so absent-minded?

She had just two francs in her pocket. Whom could she go to? All of a sudden she thought of her cousin Barral, assistant superintendent in the naval department office.

She had just enough to pay for a hack; and she had herself driven to his residence. And she met him just as he was leaving the house to go to the office. He had just such another big pocketbook under his arm as Lebrument had.

She jumped from the hack.

"Henry!" she cried.

He stopped in astonishment.

"What! Jeanne!—you here? all alone? . . . why what is the matter?—where have you come from?"

She stammered out, with her eyes full of tears:

"I lost my husband a little while ago."

"Lost him—where?"

"On an omnibus."

"On an omnibus? . . . oh!"

Then she told him all her adventure, with tears.

He listened thoughtfully. He asked:

"Well, was his head perfectly clear this morning?"

"Yes."

"Good! Did he have much money about him?"

"Yes,—he had my dowry——"

"Your dowry?—the whole of it?"

"Yes, the whole of it . . . to pay for his practice."

"Well! well; my dear cousin, your husband must at this very moment be making tracks for Belgium."

Still she did not understand. She stammered:

"You say my husband . . . is, you say? . . ."

"I say that he has swindled you out of your—your capital . . . that's all there is about it!"

She stood there panting, suffocating;—she murmured:

"Then he is . . . he is . . . he is a scoundrel!"

(which he wore on principle) he caused a great deal of astonishment among the Chinese he met, and, of course, was taken for a very high personage.

The caravan crossed rivers which proved great obstacles, being so sinuous that they had to be forded as often as fifteen times. Finally, they entered the Gobi Desert. They met Bactrian camels, whose thickening fur already heralded the approaching winter; soldiers on furlough, without pay, and who had eyes like wolves'; merchants sitting in their traps, accompanied by their wives, placidly drawing puffs of smoke through their waterpipes, missionaries of the Foreign Bible Society, sharpers who displayed great dexterity in the shell game at which the Mongolians stand ready to lose their souls and their dollars. One evening, being a little bored with these sights, which were always the same, Erik La Bonn had pushed ahead of his escort to visit a hunting pavilion, halfway up a hill, which had been built for the great emperor Kien Lung. He lost his way and found that he was alone in a desolate valley strewn with stones and boulders. For days, to be sure, there had not been any trees, but never until this moment had he felt the vast and naked grandeur of Asia. Even the beaten path had disappeared: It seemed that after several smaller paths had become entangled with it and spread it out in several different directions, the path had stopped of its own accord on the edge of a void—on the very brink of an underworld.

La Bonn did not know what fear was. He carried no weapons on his travels, except mustard, with which, as he used to say, he defended himself during the day against the vile taste of the native cooking, and he sprinkled it on his bed at night to keep the vermin away. He had been told that bandits only held the rich Nomad families for ransom and hardly ever molested Europeans, so that he really dreaded nothing but the tenacity of the beggars and the smell of the Mongolian women. He stopped: around him nothing but debris of porphyrous rock, shafts of abandoned coal mines, and a blinding sun which set the dry autumn air on fire. Suddenly, some twenty or thirty yards away, he noticed a striking object lying on the ground; at first he took it to be a mirror. He went up to it and found it to be the skull of a horse. There was no sign of a skeleton. This skull was so white, so highly polished by many winds and rains, so perfect in substance, so strangely shaped, with its sloping indentation of the nose, and the empty, horrible looking hollows of the eyes—so religious almost in its stripped barrenness, that it seemed to date from the very first years of the existence of this earth. Erik La Bonn alighted from his horse and took the object into his hands; it was terribly heavy. For a long time this modern Hamlet, having placed the skull on his knees, lost himself in thoughts. Were these the last remains of some caravan, which, overtaken by the fierce, salty winds, had perished there of thirst? Was this the last vestige of the moment of

on end, yellow lamas with shaven heads remained to mill about the strange fetish of the white man.

It was plain that the indifferent and skeptical Chinese had been left far behind, that one was in the midst of those superstitious and wild Mongolians, sons of a country particularly given to magic and all sorts of devilish practices. Soon the crowd became so large that the courtyard of the inn was completely filled. The pork bladders, which served as lamps, were lighted. At just about that time the clandestine opium vendors and the managers of the Jehol theatre sent a delegation to make a complaint that the resorts of pleasure were empty and to request that the stranger go to his room and kindly remain there.

The next day, after having left his calling card at the governor's—leaving one's calling card is regarded in the Orient as a propitious rite and is a rigid requirement of good form—Erik La Bonn went to the temple. This was another monument of dried mud, of no definite epoch, located outside the town, in the midst of a dirt and refuse dump. There Buddha smiled. La Bonn was received by a priest who was half doctor, half sorcerer, clad in yellow silk; quite a pleasant person. In the usual roundabout fashion La Bonn put several questions to him. He had him asked if in these parts any particular faith or belief was attached to animal bones, more specially a horse's skull. The answer that he received was that every kind of skeleton was a dangerous abomination because the greedy souls of a body are always hovering about it in order to reincarnate themselves. A horse's skull had often enriched its finder, but caused his male progeny to perish. Women pregnant more than five months should stand in fear of it. However, everything depended on the day on which the object had been found.

Last night . . . ?

That was one of the very worst days, said the lama. One of the most dreaded on the whole calendar. Although prayers might yet be said, before nightfall, still there was little hope. There was really nothing else to do but to fly before the invisible, to fool the demons, or to burn the skull. La Bonn shrugged his shoulders at all this nonsense and gave orders to have his find attached to his saddle. And from then on the horse's skull never left that place.

Thus he travelled through central Asia. An invisible protection seemed to emanate from the skull: Bandits never came near the caravan; nowhere was hospitality refused. La Bonn was allowed to wash in the sacred hot springs, and when he reached the country of the great pastures he always had his share of fresh meat and almost every night he found a wooden bed under those strange tents of the nomadic Mongolians, quarters made of such thick felt that they were as hot inside as one of those Norwegian cookers in which food can be boiled without fire. When he met lamas, bent on pilgrimages to Thibet, they honoured him by offering

tale and had asked for the privilege of keeping the skull during the absence of his friend. The much-travelled La Bonn then began to receive strange letters from the captain which became disquieting, and finally totally demented. He was just preparing to return when he learned that the old mariner had been found one morning suspended from the window fastening. On the table, in plain view, was the horse's head. La Bonn hoped that the captain's heirs would inherit it and took pains not to give a sign of life. But on the very next day after his return, he received a call from a notary who informed him that he had been made the captain's sole heir, and that the skull would be returned to him so soon as the seals had been broken. Then these things happened: A little later La Bonn gave it to a painter for a still life, but the latter's studio burned down. He gave it to a raffle, but the number that should have won it was never presented. People began to know the history of the skull. The servants did not dare enter the room any more on account of the "haunted head," as they called it. It seemed indeed that all the mishaps which the heavens had spared La Bonn and which, without dropping, had remained suspended over his head, and the strange immunity which he enjoyed, were suddenly interrupted as soon as the skull left his hands. He did not dare destroy it for fear of some curse befalling him. He could no longer risk giving it away for fear of participating in a crime.

"Alas! You, the last remains of the companion of the greatest conqueror the world has ever known," thought La Bonn, "perhaps there is nothing you fear more than rest. Perhaps you are anxious to escape from among these sedentary lives where I have put you, to regain your freedom? And is that the reason why you perpetrate all these crimes? Perhaps what you like in me is a taste similar to your own, for a life which is a continuous journey, a passion for moving on to always new countries, and climates which are never the same?"

It was night, and La Bonn, thus soliloquising, looked from his bed at the horse's skull which the light of the moon was illuminating with a soft silver glow which had nothing earthly in it and seemed to resemble the colour of infinite space.

La Bonn knew the moment had come. It would be now or never. He put an overcoat on over his pyjamas, took the skull on his shoulders and went down to the street; it weighed a great deal. Soon it was necessary to carry it in both hands. Finally La Bonn reached the bridge *de l'Alma*. A cold wind was blowing, which reminded him of the great winds of the steppes, the Seine curved gently as it flowed past the *Trocadero*, the two towers of which were outlined against the sky, darker than the night. After ceasing to be royal a little further up, as it passed in front of the Louvre, the Seine now abandoned itself to romantic gracefulness as it flowed on to Passy. Erik•La Bonn placed the skull on the railing of the bridge. He was thinking of the great Siberian streams, of the torrents of

# SPAIN

## Introduction

LIKE most of the early literatures, that of Spain has its beginnings in minstrelsy; and the first great epic that has survived through the ages is the *Chronicle of the Cid*, dating from the middle of the twelfth century. This is a series of episodes relating the adventures of Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar (d. 1099), the national hero, surnamed the Cid by the Arabs.

In the latter part of the thirteenth century prose tales began to be cultivated, and we find Juan Manuel, the nephew of Alphonso X., among the chief writers of mediæval Castilian prose. His best known work is the collection of stories entitled *El Conde Lucanor* and sometimes named the *Book of Examples*. Each story points a moral and ends "when Don Johan heard this example he found it good, ordered it to be set down in this book, and added these verses."

With the appearance of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, a new form of literature is introduced, namely, the picaresque novel, dealing with rogues and scoundrels in a very amusing manner. The novel consists of a number of incidents held together by virtue of a central character. Other examples of this species, and equally interesting are Quevedo's *Paul the Sharper*, and Aleman's *Guzman de Alfarache*.

The most celebrated Spanish writer, Cervantes, lived at the period when Spain had achieved the peak of her power and glory, her golden age. His *Don Quixote* is one of the most humorous, satirical and, at times, poignantly wistful books in all of literature. It simultaneously bridges and dominates mediæval and modern Spanish literature. Cervantes, among other things, also wrote twelve stories known as the *Exemplary Novels*, which alone would have sufficed to establish his reputation.

The defeat of the Armada brought in its wake a complete decline of Spanish literature, and throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it loses its vigour, colour and originality. In the first part of the last century French influence is evident, although, curiously enough, Spanish writers escape almost entirely the romantic movement that sweeps all of Europe.

The renaissance of Spanish fiction is ushered in by Fernan Caballero, a serious realist, and Alarcon, an able story-teller. Pereda is remarkable at describing the life of peasants and fishermen, while Valera is much



ture, but if he be not like him, I think he had better desist." And the Conde then enquired how that affair had been?

## THE HISTORY

Patronio said, that "in a certain town there lived a noble Moor, who had one son, the best young man ever known perhaps in the world. He was not, however, wealthy enough to enable him to accomplish half the many laudable objects which his heart prompted him to undertake, and for this reason he was in great perplexity, having the will and not the power to perform it.

"Now in that same town there dwelt another Moor, far more honoured and rich than the youth's father; and he, too, had an only daughter, who offered a strange contrast to this excellent young man; her manners being as violent and bad as his were good and pleasing, insomuch that no man liked to think of an union with such an infuriate shrew.

"Now that good youth one day came to his father and said 'Father, I am well assured that you are not rich enough to support me according to what I conceive becoming and honourable. It will, therefore, be incumbent upon me to lead a mean and indolent life, or to quit the country; so that if it seem good unto you, I should prefer for the best to form some marriage alliance by which I may be enabled to open myself a way to higher things.' And the father replied, that it would please him well if his son should be enabled to marry according to his wishes. He then said to his father, that if he thought he should be able to manage it, he should be happy to have the only daughter of the good man given him in marriage. Hearing this, the father was much surprised, and answered, that as he understood the matter, there was not a single man whom he knew, how poor soever he might be, who would consent to marry such a vixen. And his son replied, that he asked it as a particular favour that he would bring about this marriage; and so far insisted, that, however strange he thought the request, his father gave his consent.

"In consequence of this, he went directly to seek the good man, with whom he was on the most friendly terms, and having acquainted him with all that had passed, begged that he would be pleased to bestow his daughter's hand upon his son, who had courage enough to marry her. Now, when the good man heard this proposal from the lips of his best friend, he said to him:—'Good God, my friend, if I were to do any such thing, I should serve you a very bad turn; for you possess an excellent son, and it would be a great piece of treachery on my part, if I were to consent to make him so unfortunate, and become accessory to his death by marrying such a woman. Nay, I may say worse than death, for better would it be for him to be dead than to be married to my daughter! and you must not think that I say thus much to oppose your wishes; for as to

which I will spare, if I am not to be obeyed!’ But the horse stood where he was, and the master, approaching with the greatest rage, smote off his head, and cut him in pieces, in the same way, with his sword. Well! And when his wife saw that he had actually killed his horse, having no other, and now heard him declare that he would do the same to any creature that ventured to disobey him, she found that he had by no means done it by way of jest, and took such an alarm, that she hardly knew whether she were dead or alive. Then, all covered with gore as he was, he again seated himself at table, swearing that though he had a thousand horses, or wives, or servants, if they refused to do his behest he would not scruple to kill them all; and he once more began to look around him, with his sword in his hand. And after he had looked well round him, and found no other living thing near him, he turned his eyes fiercely upon his wife, and said in a great passion, ‘Get up, and bring me some water to wash my hands’; and his wife, expecting nothing less than to be cut to pieces, rose in a great hurry, and giving him water for his hands, said to him,—‘Ah, how I ought to return thanks to God, who inspired you with the thought of doing as you have just done! for, otherwise, owing to the wrong treatment of my foolish friends, I should have behaved in the same way to you as I did to them.’

“After this he commanded her to help him to something to eat, and this in such a tone, that she felt as if her head were on the point of dropping off upon the floor; so that there was a perfect understanding settled between them during that night; and she never spoke, but only did everything which he required her to do. After they had reposed some time, the husband said,—‘The passion I have been put into this night has hindered me from sleeping: get you up, and see that nobody comes to disturb me, and prepare me something well cooked to eat!’

“When it came full day, and the fathers, mothers, and other relatives arrived at the door, they all listened; and hearing no one speak, at first concluded that the unfortunate man was either dead or mortally wounded by his ferocious bride. In this they were the more confirmed, when they saw her standing at the door and the bridegroom not there. But when the lady saw them advancing, she stepped gently on tip-toe towards them, and whispered, ‘False friends, as you are, how dared you to come up to the door in that way, or even to breathe a word? Be silent, as you value your lives or mine;—hush, and awake him not.’

“Now when they were all made acquainted with what she said, they greatly marvelled at it; but when they learnt all that had passed during the night, their wonder was changed into admiration of the young man, for having so well known how to manage what concerned him, and to maintain order in his house. From that day forth, so excellently was his wife governed, and so well conditioned in every respect, that they led a very pleasant sort of life together. Such indeed was the good example

## HOW LAZARO SERVED A PRIEST

(From *Lazarillo de Tormes*)

THE next day, not considering myself quite safe where I was, I went to a place called Maqueda, where, as it were in punishment of my evil deeds, I fell in with a certain priest. I accosted him for alms, when he enquired whether I knew how to assist at mass. I answered that I did, which was true, for the old man, notwithstanding his ill treatment, taught me many useful things,—and this was one of them. The priest therefore engaged me on the spot.

There is an old proverb which speaks of getting out of the frying pan into the fire, which was indeed my unhappy case in this change of masters. The old blind man, selfish as he was, seemed an Alexander the Great, in point of magnificence, on comparison with this priest, who was, without exception, the most niggardly of all miserable devils I have ever met with. It seemed as though the meanness of the whole world was gathered together in his wretched person. It would be hard to say whether he inherited his disposition, or whether he had adopted it with his cassock and gown. He had a large old chest, well secured by a lock, the key of which he always carried about him, tied to a part of his clothing. When the charity bread came from the church, he would with his own hands deposit it in the chest, and then carefully turn the key.

Throughout the whole house there was nothing to eat. Even the sight of such things as we see in other houses, such as smoked bacon, cheese, or bread, would have done my heart good, although I might have been forbidden to taste them. The only eatable we had was a string of onions, and these were locked up in a garret. Every fourth day I was allowed *one*; and when I asked for the key to take it, if anyone chanced to be present, he would make a serious matter of it, saying, as he gave me the key, "Take it, and return quickly; for when you go to that emptying room, you never know when to come out of it;"—speaking as though all the sweets of Valencia were there, when I declare to you, as I said before, the devil a bit of anything was there but this string of onions hung on a nail, and of these he kept such an account, that if my unlucky stars had tempted me to take more than my allowance, it would have cost me very dear.

In the end, I should in fact have died of hunger, with so little feeling did this reverend gentleman treat me, although with himself he was rather more liberal. Five farthings' worth of meat was his allowance or dinner and supper. It is true that he divided the broth with me; but my share of the meat I might have put in my eye instead of my mouth, and have been none the worse for it: but sometimes, by good luck, I got a little morsel of bread. In this part of the country it is the custom on

During all the time I was in this service, which was nearly six months, only twenty persons paid the debt of nature, and these I verily believe that I killed, or rather that they died, by the incessant importunity of my particular prayers. Such was my extreme suffering, as to make me think that the Lord, compassionating my unhappy and languishing condition, visited some with death to give me life. But for my present necessity there was no remedy; if on the days of funerals I lived well, the return to my old allowance of an onion every fourth day seemed doubly hard; so that I may truly say, I took delight in nothing but death, and oftentimes I have invoked it for myself as well as for others. To me, however, it did not arrive, although continually hovering about me in the ugly shape of famine and short commons. I thought many times of leaving my brute of a master, but two reflections disconcerted me; the first was, the doubt whether I could make my way by reason of the extreme weakness to which hunger had reduced me; and the second suggested, that my first master, having done his best to starve me, and my next having succeeded so far in the same humane object as to bring me to the brink of the grave, whether the third might not, by pursuing the same course, actually thrust me into it.

These considerations made me now pause, lest, by venturing a step further, it would be my certain fate to be a point lower in fortune, and then the world might truly say, "Farewell, Lazaro."

It was during this trying and afflicting time, when, seeing things going from bad to worse, without anyone to advise with, I was praying with all Christian humility, that I might be released from such misery, that one day, when my wretched, miserable, covetous thief of a master had gone out, an angel, in the likeness of a tinker, knocked at the door—for I verily believe he was directed by Providence to assume that habit and employment—and enquired whether I had anything to mend? Suddenly a light flashed upon me, as though imparted by an invisible and unknown power.—"Uncle," said I, "I have unfortunately lost the key of this great chest, and I'm sadly afraid my master will beat me; for God's sake, try if you can fit it, and I will reward you." The angelic tinker drew forth a large bunch of keys, and began to try them, while I assisted his endeavours with my feeble prayers; when lo, and behold! when least I thought it, the lid of the chest arose, and I almost fancied I beheld the divine essence therein in the shape of loaves of bread. "I have no money," said I to my preserver, "but give me the key and help yourself." He took some of the whitest and best bread he could find, and went away well pleased, though not half so well as myself. I refrained from taking any for the present, lest the deficiency might be noticed; and contented myself with the hope, that, on seeing so much in my power, hunger would hardly dare to approach me.

My wretched master returned, and it pleased God that the offering

crumbs, which I ate like so many sugar plums; and with that I in some measure consoled myself and contrived to live.

The priest, when he came home to dinner and opened the chest, beheld with dismay the havoc made in his store; but he immediately supposed it to have been occasioned by rats, so well had I imitated the style of those depredators. He examined the chest narrowly, and discovered the little holes through which the rats might have entered; and calling me, he said, "Lazaro, look what havoc has been made in our bread during the night." I seemed very much astonished, and asked, "what it could possibly be?" "What has done it?" quoth he, "why, rats; confound 'em, there is no keeping anything from them." I fared well at dinner, and had no reason to repent of the trick I played, for he pared off all the places which he supposed the rats had nibbled at, and, giving them to me, he said, "There, eat that, rats are very clean animals." In this manner, adding what I thus gained to that acquired by the labour of my hands, or rather my nails, I managed tolerably well, though I little expected it. I was destined to receive another shock, when I beheld my miserable tormentor carefully stopping up all the holes in the chest with small pieces of wood, which he nailed over them, and which bade defiance to further depredations. "Oh, Lord!" I cried involuntarily, "to what distress and misfortunes are we unhappy mortals reduced; and how short-lived are the pleasures of this our transitory existence. No sooner did I draw some little relief from the measure which kind fortune suggested, than it is snatched away; and this last act is like closing the door of consolation against me, and opening that of my misfortunes."

It was thus I gave vent to my distress, while the careful workman, with abundance of wood and nails, was finishing his cruel job, saying with great glee, "Now, you rascals of rats, we will change sides, if you please, for your future reception in this house will be right little welcome."

The moment he left the house, I went to examine his work, and found he had not left a single hole unstopped by which even a musquito could enter. I opened the chest, though without deriving the smallest benefit from its contents; my key was now utterly useless; but as I gazed with longing eyes on the two or three loaves which my master believed to be bitten by the rats, I could not resist the temptation of nibbling a morsel more, though touching them in the lightest possible manner, like an experienced swordsman in a friendly assault.

Necessity is a great master, and being in this strait, I passed night and day in devising means to get out of it. All the rascally plans that could enter the mind of man, did hunger suggest to me; for it is a saying, and a true one, as I can testify, that hunger makes rogues, and abundance fools. One night, when my master slept, of which disposition he always gave sonorous testimony, as I was revolving in my mind the best mode of renewing my intimacy with the contents of the chest, a thought struck

thinking it was the snake biting the chest, he would get up, and taking a cudgel which he kept at his bed's head for the purpose, began to belabour the poor chest with all his might, so that the noise might frighten the reptile from his unthrifty proceedings. He even awoke the neighbours with such prodigious clamour, and I could not get a single minute's rest. He turned me out of bed, and looked amongst the straw, and about the blanket, to see if the creature was concealed anywhere; for, as he observed, at night they seek warm places, and not infrequently injure people by biting them in bed. When he came, I always pretended to be very heavy with sleep, and he would say to me in the morning, "Did you hear nothing last night, boy? The snake was about, and I think I heard him at your bed, for they are very cold creatures, and love warmth." "I hope to God he will not bite me," returned I, "for I am very much afraid." He was so watchful at night, that, by my faith, the snake could not continue his operations as usual, but in the morning, when the priest was at church, he resumed them pretty steadily as usual.

Looking with dismay at the damage done to his store, and the little redress he was likely to have for it, the poor priest became quite uneasy from fretting, and wandered about all night like a hobgoblin. I began very much to fear that, during one of these fits of watchfulness, he might discover my key, which I placed for security under the straw of my bed. I therefore, with a caution peculiar to my nature, determined in future to keep this treasure by night safe in my mouth; and this was an ancient custom of mine, for during the time I lived with the blind man, my mouth was my purse, in which I could retain ten or twelve maravedies: in farthings, without the slightest inconvenience in any way. Indeed, had I not possessed this faculty, I should never have had a single farthing of my own, for I had neither pocket nor bag that the old man did not continually search. Every night I slept with the key in my mouth without fear of discovery; but, alas! when misfortune is our lot, ingenuity can be of little avail.

It was decreed, by my evil destiny, or rather, I ought to say, as a punishment for my evil doings, that one night, when I was fast asleep, my mouth being somewhat open, the key became placed in such a position therein, that my breath came in contact with the hollow of the key, and caused—the worst luck for me!—a loud whistling noise. On this my watchful master pricked up his ears, and thought it must be the hissing of the snake which had done him all the damage, and certainly he was not altogether wrong in his conjectures. He arose very quietly, with his club in his hand, and stealing towards the place whence the hissing sound proceeded, thinking at once to put an end to his enemy, he lifted his club, and with all his force discharged such a blow on my unfortunate head, that it needed not another to deprive me of all sense and motion. The moment the blow was delivered, he felt it was no snake that had

## MIGUEL CERVANTES

(1547-1616)

CERVANTES, born at Alcalá de Henares, is the foremost literary figure of Spain's golden age. His was a spectacular life of adventure that included wars against the Turks; capture by Moorish pirates who held him in captivity for five years during which he divided his time between writing plays and attempting escape; constant imprisonment in Spain for irregularities in connection with government funds. Nevertheless, and in spite of perpetual poverty, he managed to write his *Don Quixote*, one of the greatest books ever conceived. It is a masterpiece of irresistible humour, unlimited sympathy, and a penetrating analysis of human frailty.

In 1613, about eight years after the appearance of *Don Quixote*, Cervantes published the *Novelas Exemplares*, twelve remarkable stories which contain some of his best work. In these he shows a mastery of Spanish prose which he seldom excels elsewhere. *The Mock Aunt*, given in this collection, did not appear in the *Exemplary Novels* until 1814, since when it has been included in all editions.

The present version is reprinted from Roscoe's *Spanish Novelists*, London, no date.

## THE MOCK AUNT

AS two young law-students, natives of La Mancha, were one day passing along the streets of Salamanca, they happened to see over the window of a certain shopkeeper, a rich Persian blind, drawn closely down,—a novelty which attracted their attention. Fond of adventure, and more deeply read in the noble science of attack and defence, than the laws of Bartolus or Baldus, they felt a strong curiosity to know why the articles the shop contained were kept, being marked on sale, so studiously out of view. Why not exhibited in the window as well as at the door? To remove their perplexity, they proceeded to make inquiries—not at the shop, but at one some little distance off, where they observed a babbling old shopkeeper, busily serving his neighbours, and, at the same time, retailing the latest news and scandal of the place. In answer to their questions, he ran on with the same volubility. “My young gentlemen, you are very inquisitive; but if you must know, there is a foreign lady now resides in that house, at least half a saint, a very pattern of self-denial and austerity, and I wish you were under her direction. She was with her, also, a young lady of extraordinary fine appearance and great spirit, who is said to be her niece. She never goes out without an old squire, and two old duennas, young gentlemen; and, as I think, they are a family from Granada, rich, proud, and fond of retirement. At

eyelashes, and on her cheeks a delicate glow of carnation. Her tresses, of a bright auburn, flowed in graceful curls round brows of snowy whiteness, combined with a fine delicate complexion, &c., &c.; and she had on a sarcenet mantle; a bodice of Flemish stuff; her sandals were of black velvet, enriched with gilt fastenings and silver fringe; fine scented gloves, not only fragrant with common essence, but with the richest amber.

Though her demeanour was grave, her step was light and easy: in each particular she appeared to advantage, and in her *tout ensemble* still more attractive. In the eyes of the young scholars she appeared little less than a goddess, and, with half the dazzling charms she boasted, would have riveted her fetters on the hearts of older and most experienced admirers. As it was, they were completely taken by surprise—astonished, stupefied, overwhelmed, and enchanted. They stood gazing at so much elegance and beauty as if their wits had left them; it being one of the prerogatives of beauty, like the fascination of the serpent, first to deprive its victims of their senses, and then to devour them.

Behind this paragon of perfection walked two ugly old duennas (like maids of honour), arrayed, if we only allow for their sex, much in the obsolete manner of their knight companion, the ancient squire.

With this formal and imposing escort, the venerable chaperon at length arrived at the house,—the good squire took his station at the door, and the whole party made their entrée. As they passed in, the young students doffed their caps with extraordinary alacrity and politeness; displaying in their air and manner, as much modesty and respect as they could muster for the occasion.

The ladies, however, took no notice of them, shutting themselves in, and the young gentlemen out: who were left quite pensive and half in love, standing in the middle of the street. From this want of courtesy they ingeniously came to the conclusion, that these fair disturbers of their peace had not come to Salamanca for the purpose of studying the laws of politeness, but studying how to break them. In spite, however, of their ingratitude, they agreed to return good for evil, and to treat them on the following night to a little concert of music, in the form of a serenade,—for this is the first and only service which poor students have it in their power to offer at the windows of her who may have smitten them.

Seeking some solace, however, for their disappointment just at present, they repaired to a restaurateur's; and having partaken of what little they could get, they next betook themselves to the chambers of some of their friends. There they made a collection of all the instruments of musical torture they could find; such as old wire-worn guitars, broken violins, flutes, and castanets; for each of which they provided suitable performers, who had at least one eye, an arm, and a leg among them. Not content, however, with this, being determined to get everything up in the



were serenading seemed the only ones that remained closed, a circumstance at which our young adventurers were not a little disappointed. Still, however, they persevered; the guitars were again heard, accompanied by three voices, in a romantic ballad chosen for the occasion. The musicians had not proceeded far, before they heard a window opened, and one of the duennas whom they had before seen, made her appearance. In a whining hypocritical tone, she addressed the serenaders: "Gentlemen, my mistress, the Lady Claudia di Astudillo y Quinones, requests that you will instantly repair to some other quarter, and not bring down scandal upon this respectable neighbourhood by such violent uproar; more particularly as there is now at her house a young lady, her niece, my young mistress, Lady Esperanza di Torralva Meneses y Pachico. It is very improper, therefore, to create such a disturbance among people of their quality. You must have recourse to other means, of a more gentlemanly kind, if you expect to meet with a favourable reception."

On hearing these words, one of the young gallants quickly retorted, "Do me the favour, most venerable mistress, to request your honoured Lady Donna Esperanza, to gladden our eyes by presenting herself at the window. I wish to say a few words, which may prove of the greatest consequence." "Oh, shocking!" exclaimed the duenna, "is it the Lady Esperanza you mean? You must know, my good sir, she is not thus lightly to be spoken of,—she is a most honourable, exemplary, discreet, modest young person, and would not comply with such an extravagant request, though you were to offer her all the pearls of the Indies."

During this colloquy with the ancient duenna, there came a number of people from the next street; and the musicians, thinking the alguazils were at hand, sounded a retreat, placing the baggage of the company in the centre; they then struck up some martial sounds with the help of their shields, in the hope that the captain would hardly like to accompany them with the sword dance, as is the custom at the holy feast of San Fernando at Seville; but would prefer passing on quietly to risking a defeat in the presence of his emissaries.

They therefore stood their ground, for the purpose of completing their night's adventure; but one of the two masters of the revels refused to give them any more music, unless the young lady would consent to appear at the window. But not even the old duenna again honoured them with her presence there, notwithstanding their repeated solicitations; a species of slight which threw the whole company into a rage, and almost incited them to make an attack upon the Persian blinds, and bring their fair foes to terms. Mortified as they were, they still continued their serenade, and at length took their leave with such a volley of discordant sounds, as to make the very houses shake with their hideous din.

It was near dawn before the honourable company broke up, to the extreme annoyance and disappointment of the students, at the little effect

demure, and hypocritical set of phrases she could command; though ending with a most flat falsehood to the following purport. "She was commissioned," she said, "by her excellent young mistress, Donna Esperanza di Torralva Meneses y Pachico, to present to his excellency her best compliments and thanks. That his excellency might depend, that, though a lady of the strictest virtue, Donna Esperanza would never refuse to receive so excellent and accomplished a gentleman upon an honourable footing, whenever he were inclined to honour her aunt's house with his presence." The cavalier replied, "that he had the most perfect faith in all he had heard respecting the surpassing beauty, virtue, and accomplishments of her young mistress, qualities which made him only the more eager to enjoy the honour of an interview."

After an infinite variety of reservations and circumlocutions, this proposal was acceded to by the good duenna, who assured him there could be no possible objection on the part of either of the ladies; an assertion, than which, however, nothing could be farther from the truth. In short, desirous of discharging her duennal duty in the strictest manner, and not content with intercepting the cavalier's presents, and personating Donna Claudia, the wily old lady resolved to turn the affair to still further account. She ended the interview, therefore, with assuring him that she would, that very evening, introduce him to the ladies; and first, to the beautiful Esperanza, before her aunt should be informed of his arrival.

Delighted with his success, the young cavalier dismissed his obliging guest with every expression of esteem, and with the highest compliments to her fair mistress; at the same time putting a purse into the old duenna's hand, enough to purchase a whole wardrobe of fine clothes. "Simple young man," muttered the cunning old lady, as she left the house; "he thinks it is all finely managed now; but I must touch a little more of his money; he has certainly more than he knows what to do with. It is all right; he shall be welcome to my lady's house, truly; but how will he go out again, I wonder. The officers will see him home, I dare say, but not till after he has paid me well again for being admitted; and my young lady has made me a present of some handsome gowns for introducing so pretty a young gentleman; and her foolish old aunt rewarded me well for discovering the secret."

Meantime, the young cavalier was impatiently expecting the appointed hour; and as there is none but sooner or later must arrive, he then took his hat and cloak, and proceeded where the ancient duenna was expecting him.

On his arrival she nodded to him out of a window, and having caught his eye, she threw him the empty purse he had presented her with, well filled in the morning. Don Felix was at no loss to take the hint, and on approaching the door, he found it only a little open, and the claws of the old beldame ready to clutch the offered bait before she granted him admit-

of her dismay; bidding her niece sit down, a portentous silence ensued. It was now late, the whole household, even their protector, the ancient squire, had retired to rest. Only the old duenna and her young mistress were wide awake, and the latter was particularly anxious for her aunt to retire. Though only nine, she declared she believed the clock had struck ten; she thought her aunt looked jaded and unwell; would she not like to go to bed? No reply; but dark, malignant glances, sufficiently attested what it would have been, had she dared to speak out. Though unable, however, to deal in particulars, she could not refrain from making some general observations which bore upon the case. In a low tone, therefore, she addressed her niece as follows:—"I have often enough warned you, Esperanza, not to lose sight of the exhortations I have invariably made it my business to give you. If you valued them as you ought, they would be of infinite use to you, as I fear time and experience will, ere long, sufficiently show;" and here she again looked out of the window. "You must not flatter yourself we are now at Placentia, where you were born; nor yet at Zamora, where you were educated, no, nor at Toro, where you were first introduced. The people of those places are very different to what they are here; there is no scandal, no jealousies, no intriguing, my dear; and (in a still lower tone) no violence and uproar such as we heard in the street last night. Heaven protect us from all violent and deceitful men; from all house-breaking, robbery, and assassinations. Yes, I say, I wish we were well out of Salamanca! You ought to be aware in what a place you are; they call it the mother of sciences, but I think it is the mother of all mischief; yes, of everything bad, not excepting some people whom I know; but I mention no names just now," she added, with a look of suppressed malice and vexation; "though I could if I pleased. But the time will come!" and she here muttered some low unintelligible threats about grates and convents. "We must leave this place, my dear; you perhaps don't know there are ten or twelve thousand students here; young, impudent, abandoned, lost, predestined, shameless, graceless, diabolical, and mischievous wretches, the scum of all parts of the world, and addicted to all evil courses, as I think we had pretty good proofs only last night. Though avaricious as misers, when they set their eyes upon a young woman, my dear, they can be extravagant enough. The Lord protect us from all such, I say! Jesu Maria save us from them all!"

During this bitter moral lecture, Esperanza kept her eyes fixed upon the floor, without speaking a word, and apparently quite resigned and obedient, though without producing its due effect upon her aunt. "Hold up your head, child, and leave off stirring the fire; hold up your head and look me in the face, if you are not ashamed, and try to keep your eyes open, and attend to what I say. You require all the senses you have got, depend upon it, to make good use of my advice; I know you do." Esperanza here ventured to put in a word: "Pray, dear aunt, don't so fret

their resolution was taken in a moment. Six friends, and an army of musicians, were behind them. Turning to them, out flew their own swords, as they called on them to draw in aid of honour and beauty, and rescue them from the hands of the vile alguazils. All united in the cry of rescue,—the musicians in the rear struck up the din of war; and a hideous peal it was,—while the rest rushed on with as much haste and spirit as if they had been going to a rich banquet. The combat was not long doubtful; the emissaries of justice were overpowered by the mere weight of the crowd which bore upon them; and unable to stir either hand or foot, they were mingled in the thick of the engagement, pressed on all sides by halt, and maimed, and blind, and stunned with the din of battle from the rear.

While this continued, Don Felix and his fair companion had been the especial care of the students and their friends, by whom they had been early drawn off into a place of comparative safety. Here a curious scene took place:—after the first congratulations upon their victory, the two students took their friend Don Felix by the hand, expressing the deep gratitude they both felt for the eternal obligation he had conferred upon them, having so nobly redeemed his pledge of bringing the lady to terms, and placing her in their hands. The speaker then continued, that *he* having had the good fortune to bear her away in safety from the crowd, was justly entitled to the prize, which he hoped would not be disputed, as he was then ready to meet any rival. The other instantly accepted the challenge, declaring he would die sooner than consent to any such arrangement. The fair object of their strife looked at Don Felix, uttering exclamations of mingled terror and surprise, while the young cavalier, just as the students were proceeding to unsheath their weapons, burst into a fit of uncontrollable mirth. “Oh, miracle of love! mighty power of Cupid!” he exclaimed. “What is it I behold? Two such sworn friends to be thus metamorphosed in a moment! Going to fight; after I have so nobly achieved the undertaking! Never,—I am the man you must both run through the body, for verily I am about to forfeit my pledge. I too am in love with this lady; and with Heaven’s permission and her own, to-morrow she will be mine—my own wedded wife; for, by Heaven! she returns no more to Aunt Claudia and her duennas. He then explained to the astonished students the story of their love; how, when, and wherefore they had wooed,—their separation and sufferings,—with the happy adventure that had crowned their hopes. Then imitating the language of the students, he took their hands, assuring them of his deep gratitude for the eternal obligation they had conferred upon him.

On the ensuing day, Esperanza gave her hand to Don Felix, and the venerable Aunt Claudia was released from her hiding place, and all further anxiety on her niece’s account.

want it for some private uses, and to make a little ointment." Perceiving that all her discourse and long speech ended in a dun, for though that was her text, she did not begin with it as others do, but made it her conclusion; when I found that I was not at all to seek for the occasion of her loving visit, which was the first she had made me whilst I lodged in her house, excepting only one day, when she came to answer for herself, because she heard that I had been told some story about her witchcraft, and that when the officers came to seize her she had cast such a mist before their eyes, that they could neither find the house nor the street; she came then to tell me it was all a mistake, for they meant another of her name, and ~~no~~ wonder, for there were more of the name and profession,—I paid her down the money, and as I was telling it out, ill fortune, which always attends me, and the devil, who never forgets to plague me, so ordered it, that the officers came to seize her for a scandalous liver, and had information that her gallant was in the house. They came directly into my room, and seeing me, and her by me, they laid hold of us both, gave me half a score good bangs, and dragged me out of bed. Two others held her fast, saluting her with all kind of ill titles. Who would have thought of it, a woman that lived as I have said? The noise the constables made, and my cries, gave the alarm to the gallant, who was a fruiterer, and lay in the next room within; he set a running; they observing it, and being informed by another lodger in the house that I was not the man, scoured after, and laid hold of him, leaving me well beaten, and my hair torn off; yet, for all I had endured, I could not forbear laughing, to hear how the dogs complimented the old woman. One cried, "How gracefully you will look in a cart, mother; by my troth, it will be a great satisfaction to me, to see a thousand or two rotten oranges and turnip tops fly after you." Another said, "There is care taken that you shall make a good shew, and be well attended." At last they caught her bully, bound them both, begged my pardon, and left me to myself.

I lay eight days in the house under the surgeon's hands, and was scarce able to go abroad at the end of them, for they were fain to stitch up my face, and I could not go without crutches. By this time my money was spent, for the hundred royals all went in lodging, diet, and cure; so that to avoid further expenses, when my treasure was gone I resolved to go abroad on crutches, and sell my linen and clothes, which were very good. I did so, and with part of the money bought an old leather jerkin, a canvas waistcoat, a patched beggar's great coat down to my ankles, gamashes on my legs, and great clouted shoes, the hood of the great coat on my head, a large brass crucifix about my neck, and a pair of beads in my hand. A mummer, who was a master at his trade, taught me the doleful tone and proper phrases for begging, so I began immediately to practise it about the streets. Sixty royals I had left I sewed up in my doublet, and so set up for a beggar, much confiding in my cant. I went

and he went halves with them. Being so well instructed by such an able master, I took to the same courses, and he provided me with fit instruments for my purpose. In less than a month's time, I had got above forty crowns clear, besides all extravagant expenses; and at last designing that we should go away together, he disclosed to me the greatest secret and cunningest design that ever beggar had in his head, which we both joined in; and was, that between us we every day stole four or five children, which being cried, we presently appeared, inquired what marks they had to be known by, and said, "Good God, sir, I found this child at such a time, and had I not come as I did, a cart had run over it, but I have taken care of it." They readily paid us the reward, and it throve so well that I got above fifty crowns more, and by this time my legs were well, though I still wore them wrapped in clouts. I resolved to leave Madrid and go away to Toledo, where I knew nobody, and nobody knew me. Having made this resolution, I bought an old suit of grey clothes, a sword and bands, took leave of Valcazar, the beggar I last mentioned, and went about the inns to find some conveniency to go to Toledo.

\* \* \*

## FERNAN CABALLERO

(1796-1877)

THIS name was the pseudonym of Cecilia Bohl de Faber, daughter of the erudite German authority on Spain, Juan Nicolas Bohl de Faber, and of Dona Francisca Larrea. She was born in Bern, and studied in Germany, returning to Spain in 1816. Fernan Caballero is one of the great figures of the novel of manners in Spain during the nineteenth century. She also wrote a great number of fairy tales. The characteristics of her work are a simple sententious style, clarity of exposition, and in general a tendency to moralize on her theme. Among her best-known works are: *La Gaviota*, *Clemencia*, *La Familia de Alameda*, and her collection of fairy tales.

*Bella-Flor*, one of Caballero's charming fairy tales, was translated for this volume by Armando Zegri.

## BELLA-FLOR

ONCE upon a time there was a father who had two sons: the older became a soldier and went to America, where he remained for a number of years. When he returned, his father had died, and his younger brother was enjoying the use of the fortune, and had grown rich. He called at the house of his brother, whom he found descending the stairs.

The brother informed the King that Jose knew the Princess' whereabouts and corresponded with her. Whereupon the King, in high dudgeon, sent for Jose, and ordered him to leave instantly and bring back the Princessa Bella-Flor, with the threat that he would be hanged if he failed.

The poor disconsolate fellow went to the stable for a horse, and then went forth to adventure, without knowing which road to take in order to find Bella-Flor. He observed a white horse, very old and lean, that said:

"Take me and do not worry."

Jose was astonished to hear a horse address him; but he mounted and rode forth, taking with him three loaves of bread which the horse had told him to get.

After they had travelled a long stretch, they came on an ant-colony. The horse said:

"Scatter the three loaves of bread so that the ants can eat them."

"Why?" asked Jose. "We need them ourselves."

"Throw them," the horse insisted, "it always pays to be good."

They proceeded on their way and then came on an eagle, caught in a hunter's trap.

"Dismount," the horse said, "cut the meshes and set the poor bird free."

"But won't we lose time, if we stop?" Jose asked.

"Have no fear. Do as I tell you and never tire of doing good."

They advanced, and in time reached a river, where they beheld a fish that had been cast on dry land, and try as it would, could not get back to the current.

"Alight," the white horse told Jose. "Take that fish and throw it back into the water."

"We haven't time to lose," Jose insisted.

"There is always time to do a good deed," the white horse answered. "Never tire of doing good."

Shortly after, they came to a castle, hidden in a sombre forest, and beheld the Princessa Bella-Flor, scattering bran to her chickens.

"Wait," the white horse ordered Jose. "Now I am going to leap and pirouette, which will delight Bella-Flor. She will remark that she would like to ride me for a while, and you will invite her; then I will kick about and snort. She will be frightened, whereupon you will tell her that the reason is because I am not accustomed to women, and that if you mount her, I will be quieted. You will mount me, and I will gallop straight to the King's palace."

Everything fell out according to the strategy, and only when the horse was rushing away did Bella-Flor realise that she was the victim of a plot.

Then she dropped the bran which she had been holding in her hands,

"Do not worry," the horse answered. "Call the fish you saved, and he will get it for you."

And so it came to pass. The fish dived down and came up happy, wagging its fins, and bearing the ring in its mouth.

Then, extremely happy, Jose returned to the palace. But when the objects were restored to Bella-Flor, she said that she would not budge from her retreat before the rogue who had kidnapped her from her palace had been fried in oil.

The King was so cruel that he acquiesced to this, and informed Jose that there was no other way out of the difficulty, and that he would have to die, fried in oil.

Jose, plunged in grief, entered the stable and informed the white horse of what was transpiring.

"Do not worry," said the horse. "Mount me, we will gallop so fast that I will begin to sweat. Cover your body with my sweat, and then let yourself be fried. Nothing will happen to you."

And so it fell out. And when he came out of the cauldron, he had changed into such a beautiful and elegant young man, that everybody gasped with astonishment, and no one more than Bella-Flor, who fell in love with him.

Then the King, who was very old and ugly, upon seeing what had happened to Jose, believed the identical change would come over him, and that Bella-Flor would then fall in love with him. So he threw himself into the cauldron and was fried to death.

Then they all proclaimed the chamberlain King, and he married Bella-Flor.

When he went to give thanks to the white horse, to whom he owed his good-fortune, he was told:

"I am the soul of that poor man, for whose illness and funeral you expended your whole fortune. And when I saw you so afflicted and endangered, I asked permission of God to come to your help, and thus pay back your kindness. For as I have told you before, and as I repeat now, never tire of doing good to people."



## DON JUAN VALERA

(1827-1905)

BORN in Cabra, son of the Marqueses de la Paniega. He pursued a diplomatic career, and while still young, travelled to Naples, accompanying the Duke of Rivas. He then visited other countries of Europe as a Spanish representative. He was dispatched as ambassador



The unknown lady fell in love with the best and most elaborate of these embroidered weaves, wished to purchase it, and asked the price.

"It is so expensive," said the merchant, "that you will perhaps not wish or be able to pay for it. But if you are agreeable, the stuff will cost you very little."

"Done! Tell me what the cloth will cost me."

"A kiss from your mouth," the merchant answered.

Irritated by such disrespectful audacity, the lady covered her face, turned her back on Abu Hafaz, and left the bazaar, followed by her servant.

The merchant wished to follow her, so as to ascertain where she lived and who she was. But the lady had disappeared in the labyrinths of the narrow streets.

After five days, the servant came to the bazaar and told the merchant that her mistress had been unable to sleep, or secure tranquillity, so much had she been preoccupied with the cloth, so much had she wished to own it; that she yielded to his terms, and that on the following day, when night fell, she would come to the bazaar discreetly, and pay for the cloth the price that had been demanded.

And in fact the lady did come to the rendezvous. The merchant then learned that she was in the harem of the sultan, from which she had secretly issued, while the sultan was hunting wild boar in the mountains. Her name was Glafira. She came from a small village situated on the slope of Mount Ida. Although her family was poor, it belonged to a high and old nobility. Her ancestors went back to mythical ages. Among them were numbered poets and priests from Mount Ida, who, weaving war dances to the sound of the clarions and to the clangour of shields struck with sword handles, surrounded Zeus, when he was still a boy, and thus prevented Cronos from hearing and devouring him.

In this remote retreat, the family of Glafira had resisted the encroachments of Christianity and had preserved, fresh and pure, the traditions and memories of paganism. It even prided itself on possessing magical powers and supernatural gifts, acquired through initiation, in venerable and primitive mysteries. Glafira affirmed that one of her progenitors had been Epimenides, sage, legislator, poet and prophet, cunning in the art of suspending life, and remaining in a state of coma, in profound caves, in order to learn by experience the tortuous movements and courses occurring through the centuries in human events.

Glafira had lost the secret of the magic arts, but nonetheless she possessed no small abilities in this direction. She could sing or recite a thousand and one ancient legends in verse of the divine ages, of heroes and demigods; of the coming of Europa to her island, of the passion of Pasiphaë, and of the triumph and perfidy of Theseus. She could still

and avarice. The people groaned, burdened by enormous taxes, harassed, and humiliated by the personal guard of the prince, composed of mercenary slaves, of negro eunuchs, and of three thousand Andalusian Mozarabs. A fracas between some of the people and various tribute collectors, supported by guards of the king, provoked a riot that was put down the while Alhakem was hunting. Returning from the hunt, and giving full rein to his cruelty, he ordered the ten chief leaders of the riot to be crucified.

For some little time, a conspiracy had been plotted against Alhakem. The horrible spectacle of the ten persons executed, excited the compassion and the fury of the people. The plot proved premature. The rebellion was vigorous. Nearly all the *muladies*, or Spanish renegates, participated. Abu Hafaz led them as their captain. It happened on the day following the kidnapping of Glafira. The king's guard and the other armed soldiers of the garrison were vanquished and repelled two or three times, finally being forced to take refuge in the *alcazar*. The mob surrounded it and was making ready to attack it. Alhakem feared that this would prove the end of his reign, and the end of his life. He called his favourite page, ordered him to sprinkle his hair and beard with fragrant perfumes, so that, through this fragrance, he might be identified among the dead, and then issued either to die or vanquish the rebels.

By the order of Alhakem, a goodly number of his warriors crossed the Guadalquivir River; these went and overran the section which was on the other side of the river, began a sack, and started a devastating conflagration. The renegades saw the flame and smoke; thinking that their houses were on fire, and their wives and children endangered, they abandoned the fight in order to succour their beloved ones. The battle was instantly converted to a rout and a frightful carnage and butchery of the renegades, attacked on all sides, both by those commanded by Alhakem, and by those who, crossing the bridge, returned from the quarter they had set on fire.

Vanquished, Abu Hafaz had enough good luck and presence of mind to succeed in escaping with a number of his followers, taking the greater part of his treasures, and Glafira. Encountering a thousand and one dangers, and vanquishing innumerable obstacles, Abu Hafaz finally reached Adra. There, he had ten of his large ships. He embarked in them and abandoned Spain forever.

Following the victory, Alhakem continued to fiercely punish the rebels. More than four hundred heads belonging to those who had been captured alive, appeared severed and nailed on poles, by the banks of the Guadalquivir. Then he wished to show his clemency, because he could not put thousands of persons to death; but he expelled thousands from Spain. Some went to Morocco and populated a large section of the town of Fez. Others emigrated farther and established themselves in Egypt.

group of writers. In Madrid he followed journalism. During the war with Morocco in 1859, Alarcon took part in the campaign as a volunteer. His valour in the war won him the San Fernando Cross. Returning to Spain, he published his *Diary of an Eyewitness of the African War*. Others of his works are: *La Prodigia*, *El Sombrero de tres Picos*, *El Capitan Venono*, and his celebrated *Historietas Nacionales*, a collection of short stories in which *The Stub-Book* is found. He wrote dramas, novels and poetry. He is one of the representative figures of Spanish literature in the nineteenth century. One of his principal characteristics is an aphoristic brusque style, and a certain humour typical of the land.

The *Stub-Book* was translated for this volume by Armando Zegri.

## THE STUB-BOOK

UNCLE" Buscabetas's back began to curve during the period of which I am going to relate, and the reason was that he was sixty years old, forty of which had been spent working a piece of ground that bordered the banks of the Costilla.

That year he had cultivated on his farm a crop of prodigious pumpkins, as large as those decorative balls on the railings of monumental bridges; and these pumpkins had attained an orange colour, both inside and outside, which fact signified that it was now the month of June. "Uncle" Buscabetas knew each one of them most perfectly by its form, its state of ripeness, and even by its name, especially the forty specimens that were fattest and richest in colour, and which seemed to be saying, "Cook us!" And he spent all his days gazing on them tenderly, and sadly exclaiming:

"Soon we shall have to part!"

In the end, he decided, one fine afternoon, on the sacrifice, and pointing to the ripest among his beloved pumpkins, which had cost him so much effort, he pronounced the terrible sentence:

"To-morrow," he said, "I will cut this forty, and bring them to the Cadiz market. Happy that man who will eat them!"

And he walked back into his house with slow steps, and spent the night with the anguish of a father who is going to marry off his daughter on the following day.

"My poor dear pumpkins!" he sighed time and time again, unable to fall asleep. But he then reflected and came to a decision with these words:

"What else can I do but sell them? I cultivated them with that end in view. At least I will realise fifteen *duros* on them."

Imagine, then, his extreme astonishment, his unmitigated fury, and his desperation when, going the following morning to the farm, he dis-

Meanwhile a crowd had collected, and it was not long before there appeared the police inspector of the public market, the judge of provisions.

The policeman resigned his charges to his superior, and informed the latter of the matter at issue. With a pompous expression, the judge questioned the merchant.

"From whom did you buy those pumpkins?"

"From 'Uncle' Fulano, the old man from Rota," the merchant answered.

"That would be the man!" cried "Uncle" Buscabeatas. "That's the fellow I suspected! When his farm, which is poor, produces little, he begins to rob his neighbours."

"But admitting the theory that you have been robbed last night of forty pumpkins," pursued the judge, turning to the old farmer, "how could you prove that these, and no others, are yours?"

"Why?" replied "Uncle" Buscabeatas. "Because I know them as well as you know your daughters, if you have any. Don't you see that I have raised them? Look here! this one is called 'the round one,' that one, 'the fat fellow,' and this one, 'the big-belly,' that one, 'the red one,' that one, 'Manuela' . . . because she resembles my youngest daughter."

And the poor old man began to cry bitterly.

"All this is very good," answered the judge. "But the law does not rest satisfied with the fact that you recognise your pumpkins. It is necessary that authority should be convinced at the same time of the pre-existence of the thing in question, and that you should identify it with indisputable proofs. . . . Señores, you needn't smile. I'm a lawyer."

"Well, you will soon see the proofs, without leaving this place, that these pumpkins were raised in my farm!" said "Uncle" Buscabeatas, to the great astonishment of the spectators.

And dropping on the ground a package which he had been carrying in his hand, he knelt till he was able to sit on his feet, and then tranquilly began to untie the knots of the handkerchief that had held the package.

The astonishment of the judge, the merchant and the bystanders reached its climax.

"What is he going to take out?" everybody asked.

At the same time, the crowd was augmented by a new curiosity seeker. Seeing him, the merchant exclaimed:

"I am glad you are here, 'Uncle' Fulano! This man says that the pumpkins which you sold me last night, and which are on this very spot, were stolen. You can explain. . . ."

The newcomer turned more yellow than wax, and tried to escape; but circumstances materially prevented him, and in addition the judge suggested that he remain.

he had received; that "Uncle" Buscabeatas returned to Rota with deep satisfaction, though he kept saying all the way:

"How beautiful they looked in the market-place! I should have brought back *Manuela*, so that I might eat her to-night and keep the seeds."



## EMILIA PARDO BAZAN

(1852-1921)

BAZAN was one of the most eminent Spanish leaders of Naturalism and of the Regional Novel. She was born in Coruna, a daughter of the Count of Pardo Bazan. During her lifetime she ardently defended the cause of feminism. She possessed an encyclopædic culture. In literature, she adopted the principles of the Zola school, conforming them, however, to the character of her race. Like the Goncourts, she was enamoured of colour. Her style is spontaneous, though some of her work is characterised by an archaic tone. Her favourite type in fiction was the man of action, and she devoted the last years of her life to planning a book on Hernan Cortez, in which she hoped to give a résumé of the strength of her race. Among her best-known works are: *Insolacion y Morrina*, *Los Pasos de Ulloa*, *San Francisco de Asis*, and *La Madre Naturaleza*.

*The First Prize* was translated for this volume by Armando Zegri.

### THE FIRST PRIZE

IN the time of Godoy, the fortune of the Torres-nobles de Fuencar was placed among the most powerful of the Spanish monarchy. Political vicissitudes and other reverses reduced their revenues and put an end to the dissolute mode of living of the last Marques de Torres-nobles, a dissolute spendthrift whose conduct had induced much gossip in the court when Narvaes was young. He was close to seventy years when the Marques de Torres-nobles adopted the resolution to retire to his farm at Fuencar, the only remaining property which was unmortgaged. There he devoted himself to the task of building up his body, which was no less ruined than his house; and as Fuencar was able to let him enjoy a modicum of comfort, he organized his life so that nothing was wanting. He had a priest who, in addition to saying mass on Sundays and conducting the festivals, played cards with him and would read and comment to him on the most reactionary political periodicals; a major-domo, in charge of the estate, who skilfully directed the crops; an obese coachman who solemnly drove the two mules of his carriage; a reserved and solicitous

That night the Marques slept less soundly than he had done since coming to Fuencar; some of those ideas which mortify bachelors kept him awake. He had not relished the grasping avidity with which his servants spoke of the money they might win. "These fellows," the Marques reflected, "are only waiting to fill their pockets, before they forsake me. And what plans they have! Celedonio (the coachman) talked of setting up a tavern . . . probably to get drunk on his own wine. And that dolt of a Doña Rita (she was the governess) is thinking of nothing else but of keeping a boarding house! Jacinto (the butler) kept mighty silent, but I could see him squinting in the direction of that Pepa (the cook) who, let us be frank, has some charm. . . . I would swear that they are planning to get married. Bah!" As he uttered this exclamation, the Marques de Torres-nobles turned in his bed the better to cover himself, for a cold gust of wind had attacked his neck. "And after all, what is all this to me? We won't win the big prize . . . and if we do, they will have to wait till I leave them the money in my will."

A moment later, the good man was snoring.

Two days later, the lottery was held, and Jacinto, who was more resourceful than Celedonio, arranged matters so that his master should send him to town in order to purchase some needed items. Night fell, there was a heavy fall of snow, and Jacinto had not yet returned, in spite of the fact that he had left the house at dawn.

The servants were gathered in the kitchen, as usual; suddenly they heard the muffled hoof-beats of a horse over the new-fallen snow, and a man, whom they recognised as their friend Jacinto, entered like a bomb. He was pallid, trembling and transformed, and with a catch in his voice, let fall these words:

"The first prize!"

At this precise moment, the Marques was in his study and, his legs wrapped in a thick poncho and smoking a fragrant cigar, was listening to the priest reading the political gossip of *El Siglo Futuro*. Both suddenly paused and listened to the outburst issuing from the kitchen. At first the Marques thought there was a row among his servants, but ten minutes of listening convinced him that these were voices of jubilation, so unmeasured and crazy were the sounds; and the Marques, angry and feeling that his dignity was compromised, dispatched the priest to learn what was happening, and to command silence. Within three minutes the messenger returned, and falling on the divan, huskily exclaimed, "I am choking!" Then he wrenched his collar loose and tore his vest in the effort to open it.

The Marques ran to his assistance and, fanning his face with *El Siglo Futuro*, finally succeeded in forcing a few fragmentary phrases out of the priest's mouth.

"The first prize! We have won . . . n . . . the prize . . .!"

"And the mules?" shouted the master. "And pray tell me, who will take care of the coach?"

"Any one your grace wishes to put on the job. I'm not going to drive any more!" the coachman answered, presenting his back, and making room for Doña Rita who entered, not as was her wont, as if she were gingerly treading over eggs, but with dishevelled hair, an excited manner, and a smile on her mouth. Brandishing a heavy bunch of keys, she handed them to the Marques, with these words:

"Your Grace must know that these belong to the pantry . . . this to the closet . . . and that one . . ."

"That one is the key of the devil who will get you and your family, you witch of hell! You want me to fetch the bacon, the beans, eh? Go to the . . ."

Doña Rita failed to hear the final imprecation, for she sailed out whistling, and behind her went the others, and after all of them went the Marques himself, angrily following them through the rooms and almost overtaking them in the kitchen; but he could not muster up enough courage to follow them into the courtyard, for fear of the cold. By the light of the moon that silvered the snowy expanse, the Marques beheld them depart: first came Don Calixto, then Celedonio and Doña Rita arm in arm, and last of all Jacinto walking close to a feminine form which he made out to be Pepa, the cook. "Pepilla, too!" The Marques gazed into the abandoned kitchen, and saw the dying embers, and heard a sort of animal grunt. At the foot of the chimney, sprawling his full length, the major-domo was sleeping off his spree.

The following morning, the shepherd, who had not cared "to kill his luck," prepared a mess of soup, made out of bread and garlic, for the Marques de Torres-nobles de Fuencar, so that the noble señor might have something to eat on the day he awoke a millionaire.

It is unnecessary for me to describe the sumptuous installation of the Marques in Madrid, but I must relate that he acquired a cook whose dishes were gastronomical poems. It is declared that the delicacies of this excellent artist, whose offerings were relished so much by the Marques, produced that illness which sent him to the grave. Nevertheless, I believe that his death was caused by his fright, when he fell from a magnificent English horse, that became panicky; this happened shortly after he came to live in the palace he furnished in the Alcala Street.

When they opened the Marques' will, they found that he made the shepherd of Fuencar his heir.

## GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO

(1313-1375)

BOCCACCIO, besides being one of the great scholars and prolific poets of his time, was a writer of remarkable tales. In his incomparable *Decameron*, he overshadowed all his other achievements. And while the range of his stories is extraordinary, not one of them is dull. Some of these stories Boccaccio invented, some he reshaped and others he borrowed from French *fabliaux*. *The Decameron* became so popular that it was translated into most of the European literatures, and became a source for Chaucer, Shakespeare, and other famous writers.

The present version has been modernised by the editors from an old English translation.

## THE STONE OF INVISIBILITY

(From *The Decameron*, 8th Day, Novel 3)

There dwelt in our city of Florence, always filled with people of different tempers and characters, a painter called Calandrino, a man of simple mind, and one that dealt much in novelties. He was often in the company of two other painters, the one named Bruno, the other Buffalmacco, both satiric, cheerful persons, and quite subtle. They liked to be with Calandrino on account of his naïveté. At the same time there also lived in the city a most engaging and artful young man called Maso del Saggio, who, hearing reports of Calandrino's simplicity, determined to amuse himself at his expense by exciting his curiosity with some strange and monstrous tales. Meeting him by chance one day in St. John's Church, and observing him engaged in examining the sculpture and painting of the tabernacle, which had just been placed over the altar, he thought he had found the desired opportunity. Acquainting one of his friends of his intention, they approached the place where Calandrino was seated, and, pretending to be unaware of his presence, began to discuss the qualities of various precious stones, of which Maso spoke with the air of an expert lapidary. Calandrino began to listen and, perceiving that their conversation was not private, he joined them. Maso was delighted at this, and as he pursued his discourse, Calandrino asked him where these stones were to be found. Maso replied, "They are mostly to be found in Berlinzone, near the city of Baschi, in a country called Bengodi, where they tie the vines with sausages, a goose is bought for a penny and the gosling thrown into the bargain; where there is also a mountain of grated Parmesan cheese, and the people dwelling thereon do nothing else but make macaroni and other delicacies which they boil in capon broth which

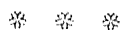


drino, who had a dull memory, had forgotten it, and therefore said, "What do we need its name so long as we are assured of its virtues. Let us go off in search of it without delay." "What is its shape?" asked Bruno. "They have various shapes, but always black, thus in picking all the black stones, we shall find the right one. Let us hasten then."

"Quite right," Bruno agreed, "but this is not a fit time for our quest, for the sun is now hot and shines so brightly, that all the black stones will appear white. Besides there are many people on the plain who, seeing us occupied in that manner, may guess the reason and find the stone before we do, and our labour will then have been in vain. We had therefore better go in the morning when colours can more easily be distinguished, and a holiday would be best, for then there will be no people about to see us. They then and there agreed to seek the stone the ensuing Sunday morning. Meantime, Calandrino begged them to keep the matter secret, as it had been imparted to him in strict confidence. Then he also told them of the wonders he had heard about the land of Bengodi, assuring them solemnly that it was all true.

When Calandrino had departed, the other two agreed on a course of action. Calandrino waited impatiently for Sunday, when he arose and called upon his companions. The three went out through the Gate of St. Gallo and continued until they came to the plain of Mugnone where they began to hunt for the stone. Calandrino stole on before the other two and looking carefully about him, picked up every stone that looked black and put them into his pockets. He then tucked up his apron with a belt thus forming it into a sack and began filling it with stones. Buffalmacco and Bruno observing that Calandrino was now quite loaded, and the dinner hour now approaching, one said to the other, "Where is Calandrino?" "I do not know," quoth Buffalmacco, "though I saw him here just now." "Then," said Bruno, "he must have gone home to dinner and left us here to make fools of ourselves picking black stones." "He has served us right," said Buffalmacco, "for permitting ourselves to be duped. Who but ourselves could believe in such stones?" Calandrino, hearing them speak thus while he stood near them, imagined that he had found the true stone, and was, by its virtue, invisible. He was overjoyed, and resolved to return home, leaving his friends to follow if so they would. Buffalmacco perceiving his intent, said to Bruno, "Why stay any longer? Let us also go back." To which Bruno replied, "Yes, let us return, but I vow Calandrino shall play no more tricks on me; and were I now as near to him as I was this morning, I would give him such a knock on the heel with this stone that he would have cause to remember it." And while still speaking, he struck him a blow on the heel; and though it was painful, Calandrino maintained his silence and his pace. Buffalmacco then selecting another stone, said to Bruno, "And I would give him one on the back with this." Then he pelted Calandrino severely. This they

fortune for deceiving his friends and not allowing them to share in the discovery of the stone. With great difficulty they finally reconciled him to his wife, and leaving him yet grief stricken for his loss, they departed.



## GIOVAN-FRANCESCO STRAPAROLA

(Sixteenth Century)

STRAPAROLA was born at Caravaggio, and is ranked among the Venetian writers, having chiefly resided and composed his works at Venice. He is to be esteemed rather a useful than a happy novelist, inasmuch as he furnished a large collection of stories for the benefit of his successors. Together with Boccaccio, he may be considered the great storehouse from which the French, and occasionally English, dramatists have drawn their subjects. His *Placcoli Notti* was completed and published at Venice in 1554.

The present version of *The Usurer's Will* is translated by Thomas Roscoe, and reprinted from his *Italian Novelists*, London, no date. The story has no title in the original.

### THE USURER'S WILL

(From *Placcoli Notti*, 10th Night, Novel 4)

IN Como, a little city of Lombardy not very far from Milan, there once dwelt a citizen of the name of Andrigetto da Sabbia, whose immense possessions, surpassing those of any other individual, did not, however, prevent him from adding to them by every means in his power. Being perfectly secure against the attacks of conscience in all his dealings, he was never known to suffer remorse for the most unjustifiable actions. He was in the habit of disposing of the produce of his large estates to the poorer citizens and peasantry, instead of selling it to merchants and others who could command ready money; not from any charitable motives, but in order to obtain possession of their little remaining property, still uniting field after field to the great possessions he had already acquired. It happened that so great a scarcity began to prevail in the city and its vicinity, that many persons actually perished of want, while numbers had recourse to our old usurer for assistance, to whom, from the urgent pressure of circumstances, they were compelled to make over, in return for the necessities of life, such interest as they might possess either in houses or lands. The concourse of people in his neighbourhood was so great as almost to resemble a jubilee or a public fair. Now there was

with great levity to their arguments, still amusing himself with arranging the most trifling concerns, and evincing not the least uneasiness at his approaching end. After long entreaties and persuasions, he was at last prevailed upon to comply with their request, and agreed to summon to his assistance his old agent, Tonisto Raspante the notary, and Father Neofito, his confessor.

On the arrival of these personages, they addressed the patient with a cheerful countenance, telling him to keep up his spirits, for that with God's help he would soon be a sound man again. Andrigetto only replied that he feared he was too far gone for that, and that he had perhaps better lose no time in first settling his worldly affairs and then arranging his ghostly concerns with his confessor. But the good priest, exhorting and comforting him to the best of his ability, advised him first of all to place his sole trust in the Lord, humbly submitting himself to His will, as the safest means of obtaining a restoration to health. To this, however, Andrigetto replied only by ordering seven respectable men to be called in as witnesses of his nuncupative last will and testament. These individuals having been successively presented to the patient, and taken their seats, he proceeded to inquire from his friend Tonisto the very lowest charge which he was in the habit of making for penning a will. "According to the strict rules of the profession," replied Tonisto, "it is only a florin; but in general the amount is decided by the feelings of the testator." "Well, well, then," cried the patient, "take two florins, and set down what I tell you." The notary having invoked the divine name, drew out the preliminaries in the usual manner, bequeathing the body of the testator to the earth and his soul to the hands of God who gave it, with humble thanks for the many favours vouchsafed by Him to His unworthy creature. This exordium being read to Andrigetto, he flew into a violent rage, and commanded the notary to write down nothing but his own words, which he dictated as follows: "I, Andrigetto di Valsabbia, being of sound mind, though infirm of body, do hereby declare this to be my last will and testament: I give and bequeath my soul into the hands of the great Satan, the prince of devils." Hearing these words, the witnesses stood aghast; Raspante's quill started from the paper, and, in evident horror and perturbation, he stopped. Looking the testator very earnestly in the face, he interposed: "Ah! Messer Andrigetto, these are the words of a madman!" "How!" exclaimed Andrigetto, in a violent passion, "what do you mean? How dare you stop? Write word for word as I direct you, and nothing more, or you shall never be paid for a will of mine: proceed, I tell you!" Struck with the greatest horror and surprise, his friends attempted to remonstrate with him, lamenting that he should make use of language so opposite to his usual good sense, language which only madmen or blasphemers could be capable of using on such a subject and in so awful a situation as his. "Desist, then," they continued, "for

does not wish the death of a sinner. You have great wealth; remember the Church; you will have masses said for your soul, and may yet sit in the seats of paradise." "Oh, thou wicked and most wretched priest!" retorted the patient, "by thy vile avarice and simony thou hast helped thine own soul, as well as mine, into the pit of perdition. And dost thou now think of advising me to repent? Confusion on thy villainy! Write, notary, that I bequeath his soul to the very centre of the place of torments; for had it not been for his bold and shameless conduct in absolving me from my numerous and repented offences, I should not now find myself in the strange predicament in which I am placed. What! does the rogue think it would be now just to restore my evil-gotten gains, and thus leave my poor family destitute? No, no; I am not quite such a fool as to do that; so please to go on. Item, To my dear lady Felicia I leave my pretty farm, situated in the district of Comacchio, in order to supply herself with the elegancies of life, and occasionally treat her lovers as she has been hitherto in the habit of doing, thus preparing the way further to oblige me with her company in the other world, sharing with us the torments of eternity. The remainder of my property, as well personal as real, with all future interest and proceeds accruing thereon, I leave to my two legitimate and beloved sons, Commodo and Torquato, on condition that they give nothing for a single mass to be said for the soul of the deceased, but that they feast, swear, game, and fight, to the best of their ability, in order that they may the sooner waste their substance so wickedly acquired, until, driven to despair, they may as speedily as possible hang themselves. And this I declare to be my last will and testament, as witnesseth all present, not forgetting my attorney." Having signed this instrument and put his seal to it, Andrigetto turned away his face, and uttering a terrific howl, finally surrendered his impenitent soul to Pluto.



## ANTON-FRANCESCO GRAZZINI

(1503-1583)

GRAZZINI was born at Florence of a well-to-do family. He was brought up to the medical profession which he soon abandoned for the more agreeable pursuit of letters. Grazzini possessed a strange and whimsical talent, and a remarkably lively disposition runs through his whole style and manner. His principal works are *La Cene*, a collection of stories in the manner of Boccaccio. In *The Jealous Wife* we have an example of his copious and flexible style which carries with it the force and freshness of popular Tuscan speech.

to alarm the neighbourhood, when hearing the terrific raging of the storm, he again drew back and sought refuge in his house. Now his wife Pippa and twin boys happened just at this time to be on a visit to his father-in-law, who was likewise about to take his leave of the world. Instead of calling a physician, then, he suddenly changed his measures and closed the door; examining next the body of the deceased, he found only four florins in his purse. Then, hid in a heap of old rags, he discovered a great bunch of keys, which from their appearance belonged to the house and chambers, the chests and strong boxes, of the miser, who, if report were true, had hoarded up immense wealth, especially in ready cash, secured in his own house.

The moment the idea flashed across Fazio's mind, being of a keen and penetrating genius, he determined to turn it to his own account, and to aim a bold stroke at fortune, whatever were the event. "Why not hasten," he said, "to his stronghold at once? I am sure to find it in his house, without a living creature near to say me nay. Why not transport it quietly, I say, into my own dwelling? I think no one will hinder me, such a night as it is, thundering as if the sky would fall! Besides, it is past midnight, and every living soul is either sheltering or asleep. I am alone here, too, and the assassin of the poor miser must by this time, I think, have taken to flight, without stopping to see where he took refuge. So, if I can only keep my own counsel, who will ever suspect that Grimaldi the miser ran into my house thus grievously wounded and died? This is surely, then, an unlooked-for blessing; and were I to go about telling the real truth, who knows whether I should be believed? People might say I had robbed and murdered him, and I should infallibly be taken and put to the question; and how should I be able to clear myself? I dread to encounter the ministers of justice, for most probably I should ever come alive out of their hands. What, therefore, will be the best? Why, Fortune is said to aid the bold; bold, then, will I be, and try to rescue myself at once from a lot of penury and pain." Saying these words, he thrust the keys into his bosom, and throwing a fur cloak over his shoulders, his face half buried in a huge slouched hat, he issued forth with a dark lantern in his hand, offering his bosom to the pelting of the tileless storm with a secure and joyous air. Arriving at the miser's house, that stood at no great distance, he seized two of the largest keys, and soon made good his entrance; then advancing at once to the most secret chamber he could find, he gained admittance by double keys, and beheld a large chest, which after much difficulty he succeeded in opening. This contained others which were equally well secured, and which he had still more difficulty in unlocking; but what treasures opened upon his view when his task was completed! One contained all kinds of gold rings, chains, and jewels, with other ornaments, the most massy and valuable of their nature. In another were bags almost bursting with gold ducats,

excited considerable noise and alarm, nothing whatever transpired. At the end of three months the government, being at war with Genoa, and no relatives advancing their claims, the whole of Grimaldi's goods were confiscated for the use of the state; but it was considered an extraordinary circumstance that there was no appearance of ready money.

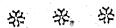
Fazio in the meanwhile continued quiet and unmolested, rejoiced to perceive how well the affair went off, and leading a happy life with his wife and family, who were now returned to him. To them he did not venture to breathe a syllable of his good fortune; and had he fortunately persisted in this resolution he would have avoided the utter downfall and ruin of his family. For the affair had already begun to be forgotten, gradually dying away for ever, and Fazio had given out that he was about to take a journey into France for the purpose of disposing of several bars of silver which he had recently made; a report ridiculed by many who were aware that he had already thrown away his time, his labour, and money in forging the precious metals, while his friends strongly dissuaded him from leaving the place, observing that he might carry on his experiments at Pisa as well as at Paris. But our goldsmith had adopted his plan very well knowing that he had plenty of good silver to dispose of; though, pretending that he had not money enough for his journey, he mortgaged a little farm for one hundred florins, half of which he took with him, and left the other half for his wife. He then took his passage in a vessel to Marseilles, deaf to all the tears and entreaties of his wife, who besought him not to throw away the last of their little substance, and abandon her and her little ones to penury and to woe. "When," she said, "were we happier or better than when you pursued your own trade, bringing us daily enough for all our wants? Leave us not, then, to solitude and despair!" Fazio, tenderly soothing her, promised on his return to throw such a golden harvest into her lap as would console her for all past sufferings; but still in vain. "For," she she continued, "if all this fine silver really exists, it will surely be as valuable here as in France; but I fear you want to desert us for ever; and when once these fifty ducats are spent, what will become of me, wretch that I am? Alas! must I go begging with these helpless little ones? Must I lose you, and be left to solitude and tears?" Her husband, who loved her most affectionately, unable to behold her affliction, determined to acquaint her with his good fortune, and kissing her tenderly, he took her one day after dinner into the chamber where he had concealed his newly acquired wealth, and related to her the particulars that had occurred. He then exhibited the whole of the riches he possessed, bags of ducats, silver and gold without end; and such was the astonishment and delight of his now happy wife, that she flung her arms in an ecstasy of pleasure round his neck, and weeping, begged forgiveness for all the complaints and reproaches she had used. Insisting upon her promise of

concerns as offered, he soon assumed the manners and establishment of a prince. He added to the number of his domestics, and set up two equipages, the one for himself and the other for his lady; his sons were distinguished for the richness of their apparel; and he continued to live on the happiest terms with his wife, enjoying together the luxuries and pleasures which they had at command. Pippa, to whom such a life was wholly new, became somewhat vain of the change, and was in the habit of inviting her acquaintance to witness it, among whom was an old lady with her fair daughter, whom she invited to come and stay some time with her. Fazio, to whom she said that they would be of use to her in a variety of ways, was induced to give his consent, happy to perceive that they assisted his wife in the cares of her establishment, and that they all lived on the best terms together.

But Fortune, the constant enemy of any long-continued enjoyment and content, was preparing to change the colour of their fate, and turn this summer sweetness and glory of their days into the chilling winter of sorrow and despair. For it was the cruel lot of Fazio to become enamoured of the young charms of the fair Maddelena, the daughter of their guest; and such was his continued and violent passion, that he at length succeeded, by the most consummate art, in leading her from the paths of innocence. Their intercourse continued for some time unknown to his poor wife, and he conferred on his unhappy victim the most lavish proofs of his regard. But as they became bolder with impunity, the unsuspecting Pippa could not at length fail to be aware of the truth, and displayed the indignation of her feelings on the subject in no very gentle terms. She reproached her fair guest with still more bitterness, and one day took occasion, in Fazio's absence, to drive her with the utmost fury and opprobrium from her house. Fazio, on returning home, was greatly incensed at these proceedings, and continued with the same infatuation to lavish the same favours upon the young Maddelena as before. On this account scenes of the most cruel and distressing nature were continually occurring between him and his wife; the demon of jealousy had taken possession of her bosom, and family peace and love were thenceforward banished alike from their bed and board. It was in vain that Fazio now attempted to soothe or to subdue her irritated feelings. She spurned his divided affection, and she met his threats with still more violent passion, treating them with merited indignation and contempt. In order to avoid these reproaches, her husband went to one of his villas at some distance, whither he invited his young mistress, and continued to lead the same abandoned course of life, while his wife remained plunged in the profoundest wretchedness and despair. These feelings, however, were soon absorbed in rage and jealousy, when she found after some months that her husband did not return, and was lavishing still greater proofs of tenderness and favour upon her rival. Thus dwelling with ceaseless

her, unanimously agreed in condemning her conduct, reproaching her bitterly for the degradation and ruin which she had brought upon her family, besides the inhumanity of having thus betrayed her husband to a painful and ignominious death. Having said this, they left her weeping bitterly and overpowered with intolerable remorse. On the ensuing day the wretched Fazio was led forth, and drawn through the streets of Pisa on a sledge, and after being thus exhibited to the people, he was conducted to the place of execution. There, having been first broken upon the wheel, he was executed in the presence of the people, and left on the same spot, by way of example, during the rest of the day.

The tidings of this terrific scene coming to the ears of his wife, whom he had continued cursing and reviling to his latest hour, in a fit of desperation she resolved to take vengeance upon herself. About dinner-time, then, there being few people to observe her, she seized her two little boys by the hand, and led them, weeping, towards the great square, the scene of the execution, while such as met her by the way only bestowed their maledictions on her, and allowed her to pass on. When she arrived at the foot of the platform where the body lay, few spectators being present, she proceeded, still weeping bitterly, to ascend the steps of the platform, with the children along with her, no one around offering the least resistance. There, affecting to lament over the wretched fate of her husband, she was sternly and severely upbraided by all who stood near, who said aloud, "See how she can weep now that it is done! It is her own work; she would have it so; and let her therefore despair!" The wretched wife then tearing her hair, and striking her lovely face and bosom with her clenched hands, while she pressed her burning lips to the cold features of her husband, next bade her little boys kneel down to kiss their father; at which sight the surrounding spectators, forgetting their anger, suddenly burst into tears. But their distracted mother, drawing a knife from her bosom, with remorseless fury hastily plunged it into the breasts of her sons, and before the people were prepared to wrest the deadly weapon from her hand, she had already turned it against herself, and fallen upon the lifeless bodies of her husband and her children.



## GIOVANBATTISTA GIRALDI CINTHIO

(1504-1573)

CINTHIO was born at Ferrara of noble lineage, and flourished during the sway of Ercole da Este II., Duke of Ferrara whom he served as secretary. Cinthio was one of the most voluminous novelists of his century, his famous work being the *Hecatombithi*, or Hundred



torments she endured on his behalf, being in hourly dread of beholding him borne homewards a lifeless corpse. "I had rather," she exclaimed, "that you would at once pierce my bosom with your sword than listen to the sad accounts I am daily expecting to hear of you; so derogatory to your own honour and the name you bear, and frequently, I fear, so unjust towards the objects of your resentment. I entreat you, therefore, by our long attachment, by all my unutterable love and devotion to you, that, if you have any pity or gentleness in your nature, you will henceforth become more reasonable, and avoiding occasions of embroiling yourself with others, consent to lead the blameless and honourable life for which your abilities and your connections are in every way so well calculated to qualify you. Then, and then only, shall I consider myself truly happy, blest with your society, and enjoying the honour and respectability of your name."

Whilst listening to the kind and judicious words of her he loved, Giovanni sincerely promised reformation, and believed that he could renounce all his errors, and never more give her reason to complain. But when he was again exposed to temptations, when his boon companions repeatedly invited him, and, half mad with wine, he received imaginary insults from the guests, borne away by the force of his habitual passions, he quickly gave or as quickly received offence. About this time, the kind governor, Trivulzi, was recalled to France, and one of a more severe and implacable disposition soon after assumed his place. Nor was it long before the luckless Giovanni embroiled himself in a hot dispute with an officer of the governor's guards, until, proceeding from words to blows, they drew their daggers, and his adversary in a few seconds lay dead at Giovanni's feet. He was speedily secured by several other officers who had witnessed the fact, and being carried before the new governor, was condemned on the following day to lose his head. When these tidings reached the ears of his poor wife, so far from being prepared by all her former fears for so fatal an occurrence, she gave way to the extremity of wretchedness and despair. Inveighing against the cruelty of the governor, her own and her husband's unhappy fate, she beat her bosom, she tore her hair, and refused the consolations of her nearest relatives. "I will not be comforted," she exclaimed in a tone of agony, "you do not, you cannot know, the sufferings I endure; and may God, in His infinite mercy, grant that none of you ever may! Away, away, then, and attempt not to assuage the burning agony I feel. It is worse than death; and death I could suffer a thousand times rather than my husband should thus wretchedly and ignominiously end his days."

Fearing lest she might be induced by the excess of her feelings to put a period to her existence, her friends were unwilling to leave her for a moment alone; yet finding their attempts to console her were vain, they stood silently about her couch, until the object of their solicitude having

as I trust that the sufferings we have experienced in this trying scene will have made some impression on your mind, instead of further indulging these womanish complaints, we will summon fortitude to avail ourselves of the last resource which fortune has left in our power." "How! what is it you mean?" inquired her astonished husband. "That you should hasten to avoid the fate prepared for you by disguising yourself in these clothes, which I have brought hither for the purpose. Lose not a moment, for as we are nearly of the same age, and I am not much lower in stature than you, the deception will not easily be detected, and in my dress you may make your escape. The guards are all newly appointed and unacquainted with your person. Once safe yourself, indulge not the least anxiety about me. I am innocent, and, vindictive as he may be, the governor will not venture to shed innocent blood." "We cannot tell that," replied Giovanni, "and the very possibility of it is sufficient to make me decline your kind and noble-hearted offer. Should he even threaten you with death, my Filippa, the governor would be certain to have me in his hands again to-morrow. So say no more of this, my love," he continued, as he kissed away her fast falling tears, "and do not believe that I would thus vilely fly, as if I were afraid to meet my fate. What will the world, what will my dearest friends and fellow-citizens say, when they hear that I have absconded, at the risk of your life, and thus confirmed the worst reports of my adversaries? No, Filippa, never; let me here terminate my restless days rather than in any way endanger yours, which are far more precious in my eyes."

But the affliction and despair exhibited by his gentle wife on hearing these words were such as may be easier imagined than expressed; nor did she cease uttering the most wild and incoherent lamentations, until, entreating fears for her reason, he retracted his purpose and promised to favour her design. And as she now assisted him, between sobs and smiles, to assume his female attire, she declared that she could have borne the thought of his death fighting bravely in the field, or in any way except by the hands of the public executioner. "It would then," said she, "have been my duty to support myself; but the very idea of your dear life being thus thrown, like a wild weed, away, would have embittered all my future existence. For I recollect having frequently heard my honoured father say, and he was one of the most valiant and high-minded of our citizens, that the truly brave ought never to shun death when a noble occasion offers of serving either their country or their friends, but that it must be truly grievous to the wretch who is compelled to meet it unsupported by any generous enterprise or any sense of honour. And alas! I fear you would at last feel yourself too much in the latter situation; and for myself, I should doubly feel it. So now, dearest love, I entreat you to use every precaution in your power to avoid discovery and effect your escape; breathe not a syllable to any one till you are beyond the reach of danger; consent

Giovanni, with the same unrelenting cruelty gave orders that both should be executed on the spot, the husband for the homicide he had committed, and his consort for effecting the release of the criminal from prison. The indignation of the citizens on hearing this inhuman sentence could no longer be controlled. An instantaneous attack was made upon the soldiers and officers of the guard, who were prevented from proceeding with their cruel purpose, while numbers rushed towards the mansion of the governor, declaring that they would have justice, and insisting that the whole affair should be laid before the king. Though highly enraged at this popular interference with his sanguinary measures, the governor was compelled to bend before the storm, and with evident reluctance submitted to refer the matter to his royal master. This was no other than the celebrated Francis, whose singular magnanimity, united to his pleasing and courteous manners, still render him so justly dear to the French people.

On receiving an account of the noble and generous manner in which the lady had conducted herself, and of the worth and valour of her husband, with the proofs of mutual fidelity and affection which they had displayed, King Francis, with his usual liberality and clemency, issued his commands that they should instantly, without any further proceedings, be set at liberty. He, moreover, expressed his high admiration of their mutual truth and constancy, and approved of the good feeling and spirit evinced by the Milanese people, declaring his only regret to be, that it was not in his power to render such examples of heroic worth as immortal as they deserved to be. After a more strict investigation of the unhappy affair in which Giovanni had been last engaged, it was discovered that his adversary had really been the aggressor, and had instigated him, both by words and blows, to the terrible revenge which he had taken, in prosecuting which, at the risk of his own life, he had laid the insulting soldier dead at his feet.

Great was the triumph of the people of Milan when the tidings of the pardon of the prisoners arrived, and they paraded the streets with shouts of applause in honour of King Francis, whose clemency and magnanimity failed not to add to his popularity among all ranks. Nor was the rage and disappointment of the bad governor inferior to the joy of the people upon this occasion, as he beheld the procession bearing the happy pair in triumph to their home. The inhabitants instantly despatched a deputation to the French monarch, expressing their grateful sense of his kindness, and their devoted attachment to his royal person.

Such, likewise, was the favourable impression made upon the character of Giovanni by this occurrence, that, influenced also by the excellent example of his wife, he from that period entirely abandoned the dangerous courses which he had so long pursued.

"Hm!" muttered Neighbour Neli, "with that hide on him, he's like Saint Joseph's ass. Those coloured animals are all Jonahs, and when you ride through the village on their backs everybody laughs at you. What do you want me to make you a present of, for Saint Joseph's ass?"

Then the owner turned his back on him in a rage, shouting that if he didn't know anything about animals, or if he hadn't got the money to pay with, he'd better not come to the fair and make Christians waste their time, on the blessed day that it was.

Neighbour Neli let him swear, and went off with his brother, who was pulling him by his jacket-sleeve, and saying that if he was going to throw away his money on that ugly beast, he deserved to be kicked.

However, on the sly they kept their eye on the Saint Joseph's ass, and on its owner who was pretending to shell some broad-beans, with the halter-rope between his legs, while Neighbour Neli went wandering round among the groups of mules and horses, and stopping to look, and bargaining for first one and then the other of the best beasts, without ever opening the fist which he kept in his pocket with the eight dollars, as if he'd got the money to buy half the fair. But his brother said in his ear, motioning towards the ass of Saint Joseph: "That's the chap for us!"

The wife of the owner of the ass from time to time ran to look what had happened, and finding her husband with the halter in his hand, she said to him: "Isn't the Madonna going to send us anybody to-day to buy the foal?"

And her husband answered every time: "Not so far! There came one man to try for him, and he liked him. But he drew back when he had to pay for him, and has gone off with his money. See him, that one there, in the white stocking-cap, behind the flock of sheep. But he's not bought anything up to now, which means he'll come back."

The woman would have liked to sit down on a couple of stones, just close to her ass, to see if he would be sold.

But her husband said to her:

"You clear out! If they see we're waiting, they'll never come to bargain."

Meanwhile the foal kept nuzzling with his nose between the legs of the she-asses that passed by, chiefly because he was hungry, and his master, the moment the young thing opened his mouth to bray, fetched him a bang and made him be quiet, because the buyers wouldn't want him if they heard him.

"It's still there," said Neighbour Neli in his brother's ear, pretending to come past again to look for the man who was selling broiled chick-peas. "If we wait till *ave maria* we can get him for a dollar less than the price we offered."

The sun of May was hot, so that from time to time, in the midst of the shouting and swarming of the fair there fell a great silence over all

"But I mean him to listen to me, by the blessed devil I do!" squealed the friend. "Can't I say my own fool's say like anybody else?"

And he ran to seize Neighbour Neli by the jacket; then he came back to speak a word in the ear of the ass's owner, who now wanted at any cost to go home with his little donkey, so the friend threw his arms round his neck, whispering: "Listen! a dollar more or less,—if you don't sell it to-day, you won't find another softy like my pal here to buy your beast, which isn't worth a cigar."

And he embraced the ass's mistress also, talking in her ear, to get her on his side. But she shrugged her shoulders and replied with a sullen face:

"It's my man's business. It's nothing to do with me. But if he lets you have it for less than nine dollars he's a simpleton, in all conscience! It cost us more!"

"I was a lunatic to offer eight dollars this morning," put in Neighbour Neli. "You see now whether you've found anybody else to buy it at that price. There's nothing left in all the fair but three or four scabby sheep and the ass of Saint Joseph. Seven dollars now, if you like."

"Take it," suggested the ass's mistress to her husband, with tears in her eyes. "We haven't a cent to buy anything in to-night, and Turiddu has got the fever on him again; he needs some sulphate."

"All the devil!" bawled her husband. "If you don't get out, I'll give you a taste of the halter!" "Seven and a half, there!" cried the friend at last, shaking him hard by the jacket collar. "Neither you nor me! This time you've got to take my word, by all the saints in paradise! And I don't ask as much as a glass of wine. You can see the sun's gone down. Then what are you waiting for, the pair of you?"

And he snatched the halter from the owner's hand, while Neighbour Neli, swearing, drew out of his pocket the fist with the eight dollars, and gave them him without looking at them, as if he was tearing out his own liver. The friend drew aside with the mistress of the ass, to count the money on a stone, while the owner of the ass rushed through the air like a young colt, swearing and punching himself on the head.

But then he permitted himself to go back to his wife, who was very slowly and carefully counting over again the money in the handkerchief, and he asked:

"Is it right?"

"Yes, it's quite right; Saint Gaetano be praised! Now I'll go to the druggist."

"I've fooled them! I'd have given it him for five dollars if I'd had to; those coloured donkeys are all Jonahs."

And Neighbour Neli, leading the little donkey behind him down the slope, said:

a half dollars. His master said: "Now he's done his work, and if I sell him for five dollars, I've still made money by him."

The only one who was fond of the foal was the lad who made him trot along the little road, when they were coming home from the threshing-floor, and he cried while the farrier was burning the creature's legs with a red-hot iron, so that the colt twisted himself up, with his tail in the air and his ears as erect as when he had roved round the fair-ground, and he tried to get free from the twisted rope which pressed his lips, and he rolled his eyes with pain almost as if he had human understanding, when the farrier's lad came to change the red-hot irons, and his skin smoked and frizzled like fish in a frying-pan. But Neighbour Neli shouted at his son: "Silly fool! What are you crying for? He's done his work now, and seeing that the harvest has gone well we'll sell him and buy a mule, which will be better for us."

Some things children don't understand; and after they had sold the colt to Farmer Cirino from Licodia, Neighbour Neli's son used to go to visit it in the stable, to stroke its nose and its neck, and the ass would turn to snuff at him as if its heart were still bound to him, whereas donkeys are made to be tied up where their master wishes, and they change their fate as they change their stable. Farmer Cirino from Licodia had bought the Saint Joseph's ass cheap, because it still had the wound in the pastern; and the wife of Neighbour Neli, when she saw the ass going by with its new master, said: "There goes our luck; that black and white hide brings a jolly threshing-floor; and now times go from bad to worse, so that we've even sold the mule again."

Farmer Cirino had yoked the ass to the plough, with the old horse that went like a jewel, drawing out his own brave furrow all day long, for miles and miles, from the time when the larks began to trill in the dawn-white sky, till when the robins ran to huddle behind the bare twigs that quivered in the cold, with their short flight and their melancholy chirping, in the mist which rose like a sea. Only, seeing that the ass was smaller than the horse, they had put him a pad of straw on the saddle, under the yoke, and he went at it harder than ever, breaking the frozen sod, pulling with all his might from the shoulder. "This creature saves my horse for me, because he's getting old," said Farmer Cirino. "He's got a heart as big as the plain of Catania, has that ass of Saint Joseph! And you'd never think it."

And he said to his wife, who was following behind him clutched in her scanty cloak, parsimoniously scattering the seed:

"If anything should happen to him, think what a loss it would be! We should be ruined, with all the season's work in hand."

And the woman looked at the work in hand, at the little stony desolate field, where the earth was white and cracked, because there had been no rain for so long, the water coming all in mist, the mist that rots

his eye hopeless, suggested: "Put a stone under the wheel, and let that poor beast get his wind." But Neighbour Luciano replied: "If I let him go his own pace he'll never earn me my dollar and a dime a day. I've got to mend my own skin with his. When he can't do another stroke I'll sell him to the lime man, for the creature is a good one and will do for him; and it's not true a bit that Saint Joseph's asses are Jonahs. I got him for a crust of bread from Farmer Cirino, now he's come down and is poor."

Then the Saint Joseph's ass fell into the hands of the lime man, who had about twenty donkeys, all thin skeletons just ready to drop, but which managed nevertheless to carry him his little sacks of lime, and lived on mouthfuls of weeds which they could snatch from the roadside as they went. The lime man didn't want him because he was all covered with scars worse than the other beasts, and his legs scared with fire, and his shoulders worn out with the collar, and his withers gnawed by the plough-saddle, and his knees broken by his falls, and then that black and white skin which in his opinion didn't go at all with his other black animals. "That doesn't matter," replied Neighbour Luciano, "it'll help you to know your own asses at a distance." And he took off another fifteen cents from the dollar and a half which he had asked, to close the bargain. But even the mistress, who had seen him born, would no longer have recognised the Saint Joseph's ass, he was so changed, as he went with his nose to the ground and his ears like an umbrella, under the little sacks of lime, twisting his behind at the blows from the boy who was driving the herd. But the mistress herself had also changed by then, with the bad times there had been, and the hunger she had felt, and the fevers that they'd all caught down on the plain, she, her husband and her Turiddu, without any money to buy sulphate, for one hasn't got a Saint Joseph's ass to sell every day, not even for seven dollars.

In winter, when work was scarcer, and the wood for burning the lime was rarer and further to fetch, and the frozen little roads hadn't a leaf on their hedges, or a mouthful of stubble along the frozen ditchside, life was harder for those poor beasts; and the owner knew that the winter would carry off half of them for him; so that he usually had to buy a good stock of them in spring. At night the herd lay in the open, near the kiln, and the beasts did the best for themselves pressing close up to one another. But those stars that shone like swords penetrated them in their vulnerable parts, in spite of their thick hides, and all their sores and galls burned again and trembled in the cold as if they could speak.

However, there are plenty of Christians who are no better off, and even haven't got that rag of a cloak in which the herd-boy curled himself up to sleep in front of the furnace. A poor widow lived close by—in a hovel even more dilapidated than the lime kiln, so that the stars penetrated through the roof like swords, as if you were in the open, and the wind

"Now what shall we do? Now what shall we do?"

"If you want to sell him with all the wood I'll give you forty cents for him," said the carter, who had his wagon empty. And as the woman looked at him with vacant eyes, he added, "I'm only buying the wood, because *that's* all the ass is worth!" And he gave a kick at the carcass, which sounded like a burst drum.



## EDMONDO DE AMICIS

(1846-1908)

DE AMICIS received his early schooling at Turin, and was later sent to the Military School at Modena. In 1868 he published his first book, *La Vita Militare*, graceful and delicate tales of military life, which achieved considerable popularity. He retired from the army in 1870 and devoted himself entirely to literature and travel, some of his most popular books resulting from his extensive wandering. His style is simple, refreshing, and he is best at depicting scenery. *The Orderly*, taken from *La Vita Militare*, is a purely emotional story, little concerned with psychological subtleties.

The present version is by Maxim Lieber.

### THE ORDERLY

FOR the past four years they had been living together, and never for an instant had either forgotten that one was the officer, the other the soldier. If the first was militarily severe, the latter was correspondingly submissive. And they loved each other; but with that rough, mute affection, which does not display itself, does not reveal itself, which conceals a burst of tenderness beneath a hard action; eloquent when it is silent, awkward when put to speech, hostile to cajolery, and accustomed, when impelled with the desire to weep, to bite the lips and repress the tears in order not to appear weak and sensitive. They had acquired the habit of laconic language, and understood each other by monosyllables; a glance, a gesture, sufficed. Their common interpreter was the watch, which regulated their steps, their words, with the most exact discipline.

"Lieutenant, have you further orders for me?"

"No."

"May I go?"

"Go."

This was the daily formula of dismissal. Never another word. And



One day the commandant of the corps had received orders to discharge the class to which the orderly belonged.

That day, the officer and the soldier exchanged more than the ordinary number of words, but their hearts spoke at great length.

"Have you any further orders?"

"—*Rien*, . . . The order to discharge your class has arrived; in ten days you will leave."

A brief silence followed, without their eyes meeting. . . .

"May I go?"

"—*Va, si tu veux*."

These few additional words represented a great step along the road to tenderness.

Their hearts yearned toward each other, but not at all to an equal degree. One was about to lose his friend,—even more than a friend, a brother who loved him with an almost religious devotion. The other, too, without doubt, was about to lose a friend, but he, at least, was returning to his paternal hearth.

And for him, this thought was a great comfort. To return home! After so many years, so many perils; after having heard time and time again while in camp the long and melancholy notes of the bugle signifying "lights out" while within the tents the lights died out one by one, and through this "mobile city of canvas, a deep quiet reigned—how often in such moments of melancholy, while holding his head between his hands, had he thought of his mother: "What is the poor woman doing now?" How often in camp at the approach of night had he heard here and there among the groups of his countrymen those precious refrains which he had hummed in his own village, during the summer while watching in the fields where the silver moonbeams fell! There among the numerous voices of friends and parents a song, clear, silver, trembling, became distinctly audible and found its way to his heart. How often had he blessed these songs as a greeting from his absent mother! . . . To return home! To return unexpectedly and see again the country and houses, recognise from a distance the roof, double his pace, arrive breathless, perceive his little sister grown up, and the brother quite adolescent. The others come forth at their joyous cry, and he throws himself into their midst, then, disengaging himself, he runs to the house, calls the old mother, sees her come to meet him, with outstretched arms and tear-filled eyes, throws himself on her neck. To feel himself squeezed in those dear arms and experience the most sacred of human joys. The very thought of these things was sufficient to sweeten any bitterness, and heal any wound.

Nevertheless, the brave fellow could not reconcile himself to the idea of being obliged to leave his officer shortly. And then, a soldier never strips off his worn coat which has served him as a cover and pillow for so

tie of gratitude binds him to me? What does he owe me? Much, indeed! I have always made him suffer my ill humour. I have always acted toward him like an inquisitor. . . . It's my character, and I can do nothing about it. I am unable to find the proper words. And then . . . in the service one dare not utter them. I can at least show him a more human face. . . . And now he is going away. He is going back home to toil in the fields, resume his former life; little by little he will lose his military habits, he will forget everything . . . his regiment, comrades, and officer. No matter as long as this young man lives happily. But shall I be able to forget him? How much time will pass before I become accustomed to a new face? In the morning, upon waking, it will seem as if he were hard at work in my room, but so quietly that he hardly moves or breathes for fear of rousing me before my time. How many times, already awakened, shall I not call him by name? So many years of companionship, devoted attachment, affectionate service, and the . . . to see him leave brusquely . . . from one day to another. . . . But that's our life, and one must be resigned to it. . . . What a good fellow! A heart of gold! If sometimes, while marching, oppressed by fatigue, scorched by the sun, suffocated with dust, I stopped a moment and glanced around as if in search of a little water, instantly a canteen was handed me and a voice close at my side said, "Do you want a drink, Lieutenant?"

It was he. He had surreptitiously left the ranks, had run to get water, at a distance from the column, who knows where? He had returned, in the twinkling of an eye, panting, streaming with perspiration, exhausted, and came behind me to wait until I had evinced a desire to drink. In camp, if I fell asleep in the shade of a tree, and the sun gradually began to beat on my face, a zealous hand arranged the foliage above me, or spread a cloak over a stack of arms to shield me from the sun. It was he, always he. Hardly had we arrived at a halting-place, after six, seven, or eight hours' march, and the tents barely unfolded, when he disappeared; and I would begin to look for him and call him at the top of my voice all over the camp, getting finally angry: "Now where is he? Who knows where he has hidden himself? Is this a proper manner of conduct? Just wait till I catch him." And so on in the same tone. After a moment, I saw him appear in the distance, doubled under a heavy burden of straw, marching with uncertain steps, shouting to right and left at those who wished to seize a handful, getting entangled in the tent ropes, trampling over the knapsacks and shirts stretched out in the sun, stumbling over sleepers, and drawing down upon his head a tempest of oaths and imprecations. He reached my side, threw down the straw, heaved a great sigh, wiped his forehead, and said fearfully, "Lieutenant, I've kept you waiting, haven't I? But what could I do? I had to go so far!"

He would spread the straw on the grass, pile it up at one end, put his

his hand to his cap. And this faithful companion is to abandon me, leave me alone, and I shall see him no more. No! Impossible! I will look him up when he goes home. I know the name of his town; I will ask the way to his village and to his farm. I will surprise him in the fields and call him by name. "Don't you remember your officer?" "Who do I see! Lieutenant, you here!" he will reply overcome with emotion. "Yes, I had to see you! Come here, my dear good soldier, embrace me!"

He is occupied with these thoughts when he hears a light, slow, unequal step on the stairs, like that of a person who would advance hesitantly and would seek to retard his ascent. He listens without turning his head; the step approaches; there is a clutching at his heart. He turns, here he is—it is certainly he—his orderly.

He looks worried and his eyes are red; he salutes, takes a step forward, stops and regards his officer. The latter turns his head away.

"Lieutenant, I'm going."

"Farewell," replies the officer, compressing his lips, and continuing to look in the other direction. "Farewell. . . . A pleasant journey . . . return home . . . work . . . continue to live like a good fellow, just as you've done hitherto, and . . . good-bye."

"Lieutenant!" exclaimed the soldier in a trembling voice, taking a step toward him.

"Go, go, or you will be late; go, it's late already, hurry."

And he extended a hand that the soldier pressed firmly. "A pleasant journey . . . and remember me. Think of your officer sometime."

The poor fellow wants to reply, tries to articulate a word, and can only groan. He still grips the hand, looks at the officer whose head is still turned away, advances a step. . . . "Ah, lieutenant!" he cries out with a sob.

And he fled.

The other, remaining alone, turned round, gazed for a short time at the door, then, resting his elbows on the table, sunk his head in his hands. Two large tears formed in his eyes and slipped swiftly down his cheeks as if afraid of being seen. He passed his hand over his eyes, looked at his cigar; it was out, and now he began to cry in earnest. He let his head fall on his arm and abandoned himself to his grief.

tones, beseeching to be liberated from her rider. But Zavali, the indefatigable, with brief, rapid gestures of alternate anger and mischief, kept running up and down the length of Susanna's back, without respite, leaping on her head and clinging to her long ears, seizing and raising her tail between two paws, while he plucked and scratched at the tuft of coarse hair upon the end, his face muscles meanwhile working with a thousand varying expressions. Then suddenly he would once more seat himself, with a foot thrust under one arm, like the twisted root of a tree, grave, motionless, fixing upon the sea his round, orange-coloured eyes, that slowly filled with wonder, while his forehead wrinkled and his thin rose-tinted ears trembled, as if from apprehension. Then suddenly, with a gesture of malice, he would recommence his sport.

"Ho! Barbara!"

The camel heeded and again set itself in motion.

When the troupe had reached the grove of willows near the mouth of the Pescara, above its left bank (whence it was possible already to discern the sailors out on the yard-arms of sailing vessels anchored at the quay of the *Bandiera*), Turlendana came to a halt, because he wished to slake his thirst at the river.

The ancestral river was bearing to the sea the perennial wave of its tranquillity. The two banks, carpeted with aquatic growth, lay in silence, as if reposing from the exhaustion of their recent labour of fertilisation. A profound hush seemed to rest upon everything. The estuaries gleamed resplendent in the sun, tranquil as mirrors set in frames of saline crystals. According to the shifting of the wind, the willows turned from white to green, from green to white again.

"Pescara!" said Turlendana, checking his steps, with an accent of curiosity and instinctive recognition. And he paused to look around him.

Then he descended to the river's brink, where the gravel was worn smooth; and he knelt upon one knee in order to reach the water with the hollow of his hand. The camel bent its neck and drank with leisurely regularity. The she-ass also drank. And the monkey mimicked the attitude of his master, making a hollow of his slender paws, which were as purple as the unripe fruit of the prickly pear.

"Ho! Barbara!"

The camel heeded and ceased to drink. From its flabby lips the water trickled copiously, dripping upon its callous chest, and revealing its pallid gums and large, discoloured, yellow teeth.

Along the path through the grove, worn by seafaring folk, the troupe resumed its march. The sun was setting as they arrived at the Arsenal of Rampigna.

From a sailor who was passing along the high brick parapet, Turlendana inquired:

"Is this Pescara?"

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as well as from a mutual contentment born of the charm of the sunset and the season, unanimously shouted:

"Barbara! Barbara!"

Turlendana, who had stoutly held his ground, leaning heavily against the chest of his camel, felt himself, at this approving shout, invaded by an almost paternal satisfaction.

But suddenly the she-ass started in to bray with such high-pitched and ungracious variations of voice and with such lugubrious passion that unanimous hilarity spread throughout the crowd. And this frank laughter of the people passed from lip to lip, from one end of the bridge to the other, like the scattering spray of a mountain stream as it leaps the rocks into the gorge below.

Hereupon Turlendana began once more to make his way through the crowd, unrecognised by anyone.

When he was before the city gate, where the women were selling freshly caught fish from out their big rush baskets, Binchi-Banche, a little runt of a man, with a face as jaundiced and wrinkled as a juiceless lemon, intercepted him, and, according to his wont with all strangers who found their way into this region, made offer of his aid in finding lodgings.

But first he asked, indicating Barbara:

"Is it dangerous?"

Turlendana replied, with a smile, that it was not.

"All right," resumed Binchi-Banche, reassured. "This way, to the house of Rosa Schiavona."

Together they turned across the Fish Market, and thence along the street of Sant'Agostino, still followed by the crowd. At windows and balconies women and young girls crowded closely together to watch in wonder the slow passing of the camel, while they admired the little graces of the small white ass and laughed aloud at the antics of Zavali.

At a certain point, Barbara, seeing a half-dead wisp of grass dangling from a low balcony, raised its long neck, stretched out its lips to reach it, and tore it down. A cry of terror broke from the women who were leaning over the balcony railing, and the cry was taken up and passed along on all the neighbouring balconies. The people in the street laughed loudly, shouting as they do at carnival time behind the backs of the masqueraders:

"Hurrah! Hurrah!"

They were all intoxicated with the novelty of the spectacle and with the spirit of early spring. Before the house of Rosa Schiavona, in the neighbourhood of Portasale, Binchi-Banche gave the sign to halt.

"Here we are," he said.

It was a low-roofed house, with but one tier of windows, and the lower part of its walls was all defaced with scribblings and with vulgar drawings. A long frieze of bats, nailed up to dry, adorned the archi-

Banche, while the crowd still lingered before the entrance to the stalls, where the camel's head kept appearing and disappearing behind the high grating of cords.

As he walked along the street, Turlendana inquired:

"Are there any taverns in town?"

Binchi-Banche replied:

"Yes, sir, indeed there are." Then, raising huge, discoloured hands, and with the thumb and finger of the right seizing successively the tip of each finger of the left, he checked them off.

"There is the tavern of Speranza, the tavern of Buono, the tavern of Assau, the tavern of Matteo Puriello, the tavern of Turlendana's Blind Woman——"

"We'll go there," the other answered tranquilly.

Binchi-Banche raised his small, sharp, pale-green eyes: "Perhaps, sir, you have already been there before?" and then, not waiting for an answer, with the native loquacity of the Pescara folk, he talked straight on:

"The Tavern of the Blind Woman is a big one, and you can buy the best sort of wine there. The Blind Woman is the wife of four men!" Here he burst out laughing, with a laugh that puckered up his whole jaundiced face till it looked like the wrinkled hide of a ruminant.

"The first husband was Turlendana, who was a sailor and went away on board the ships of the King of Naples to the Dutch Indies and France and Spain, and even to America. That one was lost at sea,—and who knows where?—with all on board; and he was never found. That was thirty years ago. He had the strength of Samson; he could pull up anchor with one finger. Poor young man! Well, who goes down to the sea, there his end shall be!"

Turlendana listened tranquilly.

"The second husband, after five years of widowhood, was an Ortonese, the son of Ferrante, an accursed soul, who joined a band of smugglers at the time when Napoleon was making war on the English. They carried on a contraband trade with the English ships in sugar and coffee, from Francavilla all the way to Silvi and Montesilvano. Not far from Silvi there was a Saracen tower behind a grove, from which they used to make their signals. After the patrol had passed, we used to slip out from among the trees"—hereupon the speaker grew heated at the recollection, and forgetting himself, described at great length the whole clandestine operation, aiding his account with gestures and vehement interjections. His whole small leathery personage seemed alternately to shrink and expand in the course of narration. "The upshot of it was that the son of Ferrante died from a gunshot in the loins, at the hands of Joachim Murat's soldiers, one night, down by the shore.

"The third husband was Titino Passacantando, who died in his bed of an evil sickness. The fourth is still living. His name is Verdura,

In response to the question he raised his head from out his plate and said quite simply:

"My name is Turlendana."

"What!"

"Turlendana."

The stupefaction of the host passed beyond all limits and at the same time a sort of vague alarm began to flow in waves down to the lowest depths of his soul.

"Turlendana?—From here?"

"From here."

Verdura's big blue eyes dilated as he stared at the other man.

"Then you are not dead?"

"No, I am not dead."

"Then you are the husband of Rosalba Catena?"

"I am the husband of Rosalba Catena."

"Well, then!" exclaimed Verdura, with a gesture of perplexity, "there are two of us!"

"There are two of us."

For an instant they remained in silence. Turlendana masticated his last crust of bread tranquilly; and the slight crunching sound could be heard in the stillness. From a natural and generous recklessness of spirit and from a glorious fatuity, Verdura had grasped nothing of the meaning of the event beyond its singularity. A sudden access of gaiety seized him, springing spontaneously from his very heart.

"Come and find Rosalba! Come along! Come along! Come along!"

He dragged the prodigal by one arm through the lower saloon, where the men were drinking, gesticulating, and crying out.

"Here is Turlendana, Turlendana the sailor, the husband of my wife! Turlendana who was dead! Here is Turlendana, I tell you! Here is Turlendana!"

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## LUIGI PIRANDELLO

(1867- )

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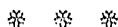
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A moment later there entered a little man, in the early fifties, with abundant grey hair, loose combed and flying to the four winds. He made one think of an automatic marionette, to whom some higher power had entrusted the strings that produced his exceedingly comical bows and gesticulations. He was still in possession of both his hands, but of only one eye, though perhaps he flattered himself that he still got the credit of having two, because he hid his glass eye behind a monocle, which no doubt had to strain itself considerably, in order to remedy his little visual defect.

He presented Orsani with his visiting card:

<p>LAPO VANNETTI</p> <p>INSPECTOR FROM LONDON</p> <p>Life Assurance Society, Limited</p> <p>Assets, 4,500,000 fcs.</p> <p>Liabilities, 2,559,400 fcs.</p>
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"Most esteemed, sir,—" he began, and talked on endlessly.

Beside the defect in his sight, he had another in his pronunciation; and, just as he sought to hide the former behind his monocle, so he also tried to hide the latter by inserting an affected little laugh after every *z*, which he regularly substituted for *ch* and for *g*.

In vain Orsani attempted, several times, to interrupt him.

"I am making a journey all through this most charming neighbourhood," the imperturbable little man insisted on explaining, with dizzy loquacity, "and since our company is the oldest and the most reliable of any in existence, for the same general purposes, I have arranged some splendid, splendid contracts, I assure, in all the special combinations that the company offers its associates, not to mention the exceptional advantages that I will zealously explain in a few words, for whichever combination that you wish to choose."

Gabriele Orsani pleaded poverty; but Signor Vannetti at once was ready with a remedy. He proceeded to carry on the whole argument by himself, questioning and answering, raising difficulties and clearing them away:

"At this juncture, my dear sir, I quite understand, you might say to me, you might object: 'All very well, my dear Vannetti; full confidence in your company; but what can I do? Your rates are,' let us suppose, 'a little too high for me; I haven't quite enough margin in my bank account, and so'—(for everyone knows his own business best, and here you might say with perfect justice: 'On this point, dear Vannetti, I do not allow discussions'). At the same time, my dear sir, I allow

Hereupon the latter realised that for the moment he was in the way, and resuming his ceremonious air, took his leave.

"There is no need of another word, with me. I can take a hint. I withdraw. That is to say, if you have no objections, I will take a bite of luncheon near by, and come back again. Do not disturb yourselves, I beg. I know the way. I will come back."

One more bow, and he departed.

"Well, how about it?" Gabriele once more asked the aged clerk, the instant that Vannetti had withdrawn.

"That—that construction work,—just at present——" answered Bertone, almost stammering.

Gabriele lost his temper.

"How many times have you told me that? Besides, what else would you have me do? Cancel the contract, would you? But so long as that sulphur mine represents for all the creditors the only hope of my solvency—Oh, I know! I know! There are more than three hundred thousand francs buried there at present, earning nothing. I know that, better than you do! Don't get me roused up!"

Bertone passed his hands several times over his tired eyes; then, slapping his sleeves lightly, although there was not even the shadow of dust upon them, he said, in a low tone, as though speaking to himself:

"If there were only some way of at least raising money to set in motion all that machinery, which is not—not even wholly paid for yet. But besides that we have the bills of exchange falling due at the bank——"

Gabriele Orsani, who had begun to stride up and down the room, frowning, with his hands in his pockets, came to a sudden halt:

"How much?"

"Well——" sighed Bertone.

"Well——" echoed Gabriele; then, in an outburst: "Oh, come! tell me the worst at once! Speak frankly. Is it all ended? Bankruptcy? Praised be the sacred memory of my good father! He wanted to put me here, by force. I have done what I had to do: *tabula rasa*, and nothing more to be said!"

"But no, don't give up yet," said Bertone, deeply moved. "To be sure, matters are in a condition—let me explain!"

Gabriele Orsani laid his hands on the old bookkeeper's shoulders:

"But what do you want to tell me, old friend, what do you want to tell me? You are trembling all over. It's no use now. Earlier, with the authority belonging to your white hairs, you ought to have opposed me, opposed my plans, given me advice, knowing as you did how useless I was in business matters. But now, would you try to deceive me? I can't bear that!"

"What could I do?" murmured Bertone, with tears in his eyes.

study of mathematics, from his fervid passion for music, and had flung him here into this turbid and treacherous sea of commercial activity. After all these years he still felt keenly the wrench that it had cost him to leave Rome. He had come to Sicily with the degree of Doctor of Physical Sciences and Mathematics, with a violin and a nightingale. Happy innocence! He had hoped that he could still devote some time to his favourite science and his favourite instrument in the spare moments when his father's complicated business left him free. Happy innocence! On one occasion only, about three months after his arrival, he had taken his violin from its case, but only for the purpose of enclosing within it, as in a worthy tomb, the dead and embalmed body of his little nightingale.

And even now he asked himself how in the world his father, with all his experience in business, had not been aware of his son's absolute unfitness. His judgment had perhaps been clouded by his own passionate love for commerce, his proud desire that the time-honoured firm of Orsani should not pass out of existence, and he may have flattered himself that with practical experience, coupled with the allurements of large gains, the son would, little by little, succeed in adapting himself to this manner of life and taking pleasure in it.

But why should he reproach his father if he had lent himself to the latter's wishes without opposing the least resistance, without venturing even the most timid observation, just as though it had been an agreement definitely understood from the day of his birth and placed beyond the power of discussion or change? Why blame his father if he himself, in order to escape the temptations that might come to him from the ideal of a very different sort of life that he had up to that time cherished, had deliberately forced himself to marry, to take as his wife the woman who had for many years been destined for him, his orphan cousin, Flavia?

Like all the women of that hateful country in which the men folk in their eager and constant preoccupation over financial risks never had time to devote to love, Flavia, who might have been for him the rose, the only rose among the thorns, had instead immediately settled down quietly without any remonstrance, indeed, as if it were understood beforehand, to play the modest part of looking after the house so that her husband should lack none of the material comforts when he came back wearied and exhausted from the sulphur mines, or from the bank, or from the deposit of sulphur down on the shore, where beneath a broiling sun he had spent the entire day superintending a shipment of the mineral.

After his father had died rather unexpectedly, he was left at the head of a business in which he had not yet learned to see his way clearly. Alone and without a guide, he had hoped for the moment that he could

all through this life a road that he hates? And he thought of all the other unhappy men and women constrained by fate to careers that were even harder and more miserable.

Sometimes a familiar cry, the cry of one of his children, would suddenly recall him to himself. Flavia, too, would be roused from her waking dream; but he would hasten to say: "No, I am going!" And he would take the child from its crib and begin to walk up and down the room, cradling it in his arms to hush it to sleep again and, as it were, at the same time to hush to sleep his own suffering. Little by little, as the child's eyes closed, the night became more tranquil to his own eyes; and when the baby had been restored to its crib he would stand for a while gazing out through the panes of the window up into the sky at the star that shone the brightest of them all.

In this way nine years had passed. At the beginning of the last of these years, just at the time when his financial position began to look dark, Flavia started in to overrun her allowance for her personal expenses; she had also demanded a carriage for herself, and he had not seen how he could refuse her.

And now Bertone was advising him to cut down all expenses, even, indeed, especially, those of the home.

To be sure, Dr. Sarti, who had been his intimate friend from childhood, had advised Flavia to change her mode of life, to give herself a little more freedom in order to overcome the depressed condition of nerves brought on by so many years of a shut-in and monotonous existence.

At this thought Gabriele aroused himself, rose from the sofa, and began to pace up and down the office, thinking now of his friend, Lucio Sarti, with a feeling divided between envy and scorn.

They had been together in Rome in their student days. At that time neither the one nor the other could let a single day pass without their seeing each other; and up to within a very recent time this old bond of fraternal affection had not in the least relaxed. He had absolutely refused to find an explanation for the change which had come in an impression he had received during the latest illness of one of the children,—namely, that Sarti had showed a rather exaggerated concern on behalf of his wife,—an impression and nothing more, which he had hastened to wipe out of his memory, knowing beyond question the strict honesty of his friend and of his wife.

Nevertheless, it was true and undeniable that Flavia agreed in everything, and despite of everything, with the doctor's way of thinking; in the discussions that lately had become rather frequent she always nodded assent to the doctor's words, although it was her habit at home never to take part in discussions. It had begun to annoy him. If she approved those ideas, why could she not have been the first to

"Oh, I don't expect you to concern yourself," said Flavia resentfully. "I only asked if I might have the carriage. But I can walk." She turned to leave.

"Take the carriage. I don't need it," Gabriele rejoined hastily, adding, "Are you going alone?"

"With little Carlo. Aldo and Titti are in punishment."

"Poor little things!" exclaimed Gabriele, almost involuntarily, his gaze fixed and absorbed.

Flavia assumed that this commiseration was meant as a reproof to her, and she begged her husband to trust her to know what was best for the children.

"Why, of course, of course, if they have done wrong," he answered. "I was only thinking that even if they do nothing, poor little things, they are likely to see a far heavier punishment fall upon their heads before many months are over." Flavia turned to look at him.

"You mean?"

"Nothing, my dear, a mere nothing, of no more importance than the veil or feather on your hat; just the ruin of our house, that's all." "Ruin?"

"Yes, and poverty. And something worse, perhaps, for me."

"Do you know what you are saying?"

"Why, yes, and perhaps even—do I surprise you?"

Flavia drew nearer, deeply agitated, with her eyes fixed upon her husband, as if in doubt whether he was speaking seriously.

Gabriele, with a nervous laugh on his lips, answered her tremulous questions in a low, calm voice, as though it were a question of the ruin of some one else and not his own. Then, at the sight of her horrified face, he added:

"Ah, my dear! If you had cared even a little bit for me, if in all these years you had ever tried to understand just how much pleasure I got out of this delightful business of mine, you would not be quite so amazed now. There is a limit to every sacrifice. And when a poor man is constrained to make a sacrifice beyond his strength——"

"Constrained? Who has constrained you?" demanded Flavia, interrupting him because he had seemed to lay a special emphasis upon that word.

Gabriele stared at his wife as though disconcerted by the interruption and also by the attitude of defiance which she now assumed toward him under the impulse of some deep and secret agitation. It seemed as though a flood of bitterness welled up in his throat and burned his mouth. However, he forced his lips to take on their previous nervous smile, though not quite so successfully as before, and resumed:

"Or of my own free will, if you prefer."

"I don't come into it!" Flavia answered him emphatically, meeting

Flavia drew a long sigh and half closing her eyes with the calmness of contempt, replied:

"Anyone who has even had a slight glimpse of our intimate home life has been unable to help seeing——"

"No, I mean him!" interrupted Gabriele with increasing violence. "He alone! A man who keeps watch over himself as though he were his own jailer because his father——" He checked himself, thinking better of what he was about to say, then resumed: "I don't blame him for that, but I say that he was right in living as he has lived, strictly and anxiously watchful of his every act. He had to raise himself in the eyes of the public out of the wretched and infamous misery into which his parents had flung him. But what had that to do with my children? Why should I be expected to play the tyrant over my children?"

"Who says play the tyrant?" Flavia ventured to observe.

"I wanted them to be free," he burst out. "I wanted my children to grow up in freedom because I myself had been condemned by my own father to this torture, and I promised myself as a reward—my only reward—that I should share the joy of their freedom, procured at the cost of my sacrifice, at the cost of my shattered existence,—uselessly shattered, I see that now, uselessly shattered——"

At this point, as though the emotion which had been steadily increasing had all at once broken something within him, he burst into uncontrollable sobs; then in the midst of that strange and convulsive weeping he threw up his trembling arms as though suffocating and fell to the floor, unconscious.

Flavia, desperate and terrified, called for help. Bertone and another clerk hurried in from the adjoining rooms of the bank. They lifted Gabriele and laid him upon the sofa while Flavia, seeing his face over-spread with a deadly paleness, kept repeating wildly: "What is the matter? What is the matter? Heavens, how pale he is! Send for help. To think it was my fault——" The younger clerk hurried off to fetch Dr. Sarti, who lived quite near by.

"And it was my fault, my fault!" Flavia kept repeating.

"No matter," answered Bertone, sliding his arm tenderly under Gabriele's head. "It was this morning—or rather for some time back,—the poor boy,—if you only knew!"

"Oh, I know, I know."

"Well, then, what could you expect, under such a strain!"

Meanwhile he urged that they should try some remedy, but what could they do? Bathe his temples? Yes, but perhaps a little smelling salts would be more effective. Flavia rang the bell. A servant responded.

"The smelling salt! My flask of smelling salts, upstairs, hurry!"



"I don't know myself any too well yet," he answered with enforced

He applied the stethoscope to the sick man's chest and bent his ear to it. He kept it there a long, long time, contracting his eyes every now and then, and hardening his face as if to prevent the thoughts and feelings that stirred within him during this examination from assuming any definite form. His troubled conscience, overwhelmed by what he discovered in the heart of his friend, was for the time being incapable of entertaining those thoughts and feelings, and he himself shrank from entertaining them as though he was afraid of them.

Like a man with a fever who has been left alone in the dark and who suddenly hears the wind force open the fastening of his window, break the glass with a frightful crash, and finds himself all at once helpless and bewildered, out of his bed and exposed to the thunderbolts and the tempest of night, and nevertheless tries with his feeble arms to lose the shutters; so in the same way Sarti strove to keep the gloomy thoughts of the future, the sinister light of a tremendous hope, bursting in upon him at that moment;—the selfsame hope that, many a year ago, when first freed from the grim incubus of his mother, and encouraged by the impracticality of youth, he had seen as a sort of beacon light. It had seemed to him that he had some right to aspire so high, because of all the suffering he had innocently undergone, and because of the merciless rigour with which he had laid down over himself to belie the reputation inherited from his parents. He was unaware at that time that Flavia Orsani, the cousin of his friend and benefactor, was rich, and that her father when dying had trusted his daughter's property to his brother; he believed her inheritance, received into her uncle's house as an act of charity. And strong in the consciousness of a blameless life dedicated to the task of effacing the memory of infamy that his father and mother had left upon his brow, he saw no reason why he should not have the right, after returning to his profession, possessed of a doctor's degree and after winning an honourable position, to ask the Orsani, in proof of the affection they always had shown him, for the hand of the orphan, whose affection he flattered himself that he already possessed.

Not long after his return from his studies Flavia became the wife of Gabriele; to whom, as a matter of fact, he had never given any reason to suspect his love for her. Yes, none the less, Gabriele had loved her, and that, too, without securing his own happiness. Ah, it was not on his account alone, but on their own, that their marriage had been a crime; from that hour dated the misery of both. Through all the years that followed he had attended his family in the character of physician, whenever there was need, acting as though nothing had happened, concealing beneath a

friend's desperate financial straits, he remained stupefied; then, in the presence of the woman he loved, he found it impossible to restrain an impulse of selfish joy:

"You are poor, then? As poor as I once imagined that you were? Ah, Flavia, you have given me news that is sad, perhaps, for you,—but welcome, oh, so welcome, to me!"

She could not answer; she could only point with her hand to the prostrate man on the sofa. Then Sarti, recovering himself, and resuming his usual rigid and austere attitude, added:

"Have confidence in me. We have done nothing for which we need reproach ourselves. Of the harm he has done me he has never had a suspicion, and he never will. He shall have all the care that the most devoted friend can give him."

Flavia, breathless, trembling, could not withdraw her eyes from her husband:

"He is moving!" she exclaimed suddenly.

"No——"

"Yes, he moved again," she added faintly.

They remained some moments in suspense, watching. Then the doctor approached the sofa, bent over the sick man, grasped his wrist, and called to him:

"Gabriele—Gabriele——"

Pallid, as if made of wax, and even yet breathing with difficulty, Gabriele begged his wife, who in the confusion had not even thought to take off her hat, to go out as she had first meant to.

"I feel quite myself again," he said, in order to reassure her. "I want to have a talk with Lucio. Go, by all means."

To prevent him from suspecting the seriousness of his condition, Flavia pretended to accept his suggestion. She begged him on no account to over-exert himself, took leave of the doctor, and passed from the office into the house.

Gabriele remained for a while gazing abstractedly at the swinging office door through which she had departed; then he raised a hand to his breast, over his heart, and with a far-off expression in his eyes, murmured:

"Here, isn't it? You listened to me, here? And I,—how curious! It seemed to me that that man,—what was his name?—Lapo, yes, that's it,—that man with a glass eye, had me bound here; and I could not get free. *Insufficiency*—what did you call it?—*insufficiency of the aortic valves*, is that right?"

Hearing him repeat the very words that he himself had used to Flavia, Lucio Sarti turned white. Gabriele roused himself, turned his glance upon his companion, and smiled:

"I heard, you see!"

without at the same time letting him know the desperate gravity of his condition which he himself had so suddenly discovered?

"But, even with the trouble you have," he said, "you may live a long, long time still, my dear fellow, if you will only take a little care of yourself——"

"Care of myself? How can I?" cried Gabriele. "I am ruined, I tell you! But you insist that I may live for a long time yet: Good. In that case, if it is really so, you will find no difficulty——"

"What becomes of your calculations in that case?" observed Sarti, with a smile of satisfaction; and he added, as though for the sheer pleasure of making clear to himself the lucky way of escape that had suddenly flashed upon him: "Since you say that you could not pay the premium for more than three or four months——"

Gabriele seemed to be thinking the matter over for a few moments.

"Take care, Lucio! Don't deceive me, don't raise up a difficulty like that in order to get the best of me, in order to prevent me from doing something of which you disapprove and in which you don't want a share, although you have little or no responsibility for it——"

"There you are mistaken!" The words escaped Sarti against his will.

Gabriele smiled rather bitterly.

"Then it is true," he said, "and you know that I am condemned, that I shall die very soon, perhaps even sooner than the time I have calculated. Well, never mind. I heard what you said. So no more of that. The question now is how to provide for my children. And I mean to provide for them! Even if you deceived me, don't be afraid but I shall find a way to die when the time comes without arousing suspicion."

Lucio Sarti arose, shrugged his shoulders, and glanced around for his hat.

"I see that you are not quite yourself, my dear fellow. You had better let me go."

"Not quite myself?" rejoined Gabriele, detaining him by the arm. "See here! I tell you it is a question of providing for my children! Do you understand that?"

"But how are you going to provide for them? Do you seriously mean to do it this way?"

"Through my own death? Yes."

"You are crazy! Do you expect me to listen to such a mad scheme!"

"Yes, I do," answered Gabriele violently, without relaxing his hold upon the other's arm. "Because it is your duty to help me."

"To help you kill yourself?" demanded Sarti in an ironical tone.

"No; if it comes to that I can attend to it myself."

"Then you want me to help you to practise a fraud? To—pardon the word—to steal?"

"I should prefer," he said, "to show you in some other way what call a friend's act of charity."

"And how so?"

"Do you remember where my father died and why?"

Gabriele stared at him in amazement, murmuring to himself:

"What has that to do with it?"

"You are not in my position," replied Sarti firmly, harshly, replacing glasses. "You are unable to judge for me. Remember how I grew

I beg of you, let me act honestly and without remorse."

"I don't understand," answered Gabriele coldly, "what remorse you feel for having conferred a benefit upon my children."

"At the cost of someone else?"

"I do not seek that."

"You know you are doing it!"

"I know something else which is nearer to my heart and which ought be nearer to yours also. There is no other remedy! Because of your principles, which I can't share, you want me to refuse this means that offered spontaneously, this anchor which you yourself threw to me."

He crossed to the door and listened, making a sign to Sarti not to answer.

"There, he has come!"

"No, no, it is useless, Gabriele!" cried Sarti violently. "Don't force me!"

Gabriele Orsani seized him by the arm again:

"Think of it, Lucio! It is my last chance."

"Not this way, not this way!" protested Sarti. "Listen, Gabriele: this hour be sacred between us. I promise that your children——"

But Gabriele did not allow him to finish.

"Charity?" he said with scorn and indignation.

"No!" replied Lucio promptly. "I should be paying them back what have received from you!"

"By what right? Why should you provide for my children? They are a mother! By what right, I ask? Not by the right of simple gratitude, at all events! You are lying. You have refused me for another reason which you dare not confess!"

So saying, Gabriele Orsani seized Sarti by both shoulders and shook him slightly, warning him to speak softly and demanding to know to what extent he had dared to deceive him. Sarti tried to free himself, flinging both Flavia and himself against the cruel accusation and resisting even now to yield to compulsion.

"I want to see you refuse!" Orsani suddenly shouted at him between his teeth. With one spring he flung open the door and called Vannetti, asking his extreme agitation under a tumultuous gaiety:

"A premium, a premium!" he cried, dragging the ceremonious little man forward. "A big premium, Inspector, for our friend here, our

was addressed to me, to me alone, and it was correctly addressed. This is what it said:

"Leave for Rome day after to-morrow stop arrivederci stop Massimo".

I was in Vienna two months ago, for fifteen days. I tried to recall all the persons I had met there during those fifteen days. There was an old Hungarian friend of mine called Tibor, and some others named Fritz, Richard and John. I thought and thought again, but I could think of no other Massimo in Vienna but myself.

There was just one conclusion and it was a clear one. Since I was the only Massimo I could think of in Vienna, the Massimo who sent me that telegram was myself.

It was my telegram therefore.

I understand!—I shouted.

But the reader, on the other hand, cannot as yet have understood.

\* \* \*

I shall explain. But before I do so it is necessary that I tell my reader of some of the other experiences I have had in this matter of telegrams. A single example will suffice. I was arranging my belongings in my room one day when, as luck would have it, I noticed that my umbrella was gone. I looked for it everywhere. More than once (as we are in the habit of doing in such cases, as if once were not enough) I looked for it in the corner where I usually kept it, but in vain. I finally resigned myself to the loss and went about my business: we lose greater things in life than an umbrella.

I had almost forgotten it when, two days later, I received the following telegram: "Shall arrive to-night Umbrella". I gave it little thought, and at night I retired peacefully. The following morning the first thing to attract my attention was my umbrella. Sure enough there it was, in the very corner where I had looked for it many times.

Of course, I know perfectly well that it is not an uncommon thing (even if science has not as yet explained it) to find a lost article in the very place where one has looked for it many times before. And there is really no use in talking about it. But to have a lost article announce its return by telegram, that is not so common.

With this example in mind, the thing that struck me intuitively in reading that telegram from Vienna, and which I am about to explain, ought to seem quite natural even to the most materialistic of my readers.

\* \* \*

But here we have got to go back a bit.

Two months ago in Vienna I was standing before a mirror fixing my tie. I was getting ready to take my train back to Rome. There were political demonstrations going on throughout the city at the time.

readers has understood) that that telegram had been sent to me by my own image so that I might be informed of its homecoming.

Naturally, I did not hasten to look at myself in the mirror. Not at all. I did not want to give my image the satisfaction of knowing that I care very much about it, that I have been waiting for it impatiently, that I cannot do without it. Since it left Vienna eight days ago, even admitting that it travelled on a very fast train, it should have reached here at least four days ago. But I did not show myself until yesterday. It was only yesterday that I went after the mirror in my trunk, whistling an air from Aida as I did so. I restored it to its place in the bath room without even looking at it. Then with the utmost tranquillity and indifference I adjusted my collar and tie and took a glimpse at myself. There I was: there was my image, not a whit changed. I had had a vague fear that I might find it a little disturbed, somewhat resentful of my indifference, and probably tired from the long trip and its many experiences. Instead it seemed to be in the finest condition, and as indifferent and tranquil as its owner.



## RAFFAELE CALZINI

(1889- )

CALZINI, born at Milan, has been connected, for the past ten years, with leading Italian newspapers. Besides several volumes of stories and an interesting book on Russia, Calzini has written a number of plays, one of which has been produced in English.

*The Slap* appears in the volume, *La Vedova Scaltra*. It has been translated for this collection by Eduardo Corsi.

## THE SLAP

AT five, as was his daily rule, he had dinner with Citizen Galeazzo Serbelloni and Commander Baranguay d'Hilliers, his guests for the day. He begged Citizen Serbelloni to convey his apologies to his consort, whom he had been unable to visit the previous evening. At six, he signed the dispatches for the courier of Genoa, the courier of Modena, the courier of Lyon. At seven, he shut himself in his room and wrote the very bitter letter which began in these words: *Je reçois le courrier que Berthier avait expédié à Gênes. Tu n'a eu le temps de m'écrire*. At eight, he changed uniform and passed into the green room, the corner room that looked out upon the crossing of the Contrada dei Rastrelli and the Contrada del Rebecchino.